

# Western Research Chairs

## Executive Summary

With an international reputation for success in key areas of research activity, Western University ranks as one of Canada's top research-intensive universities. Defining Western's key areas of research activity has allowed us to attract and nurture talent at all career stages, while establishing cutting-edge facilities, groups, centres and institutes that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries. An essential prerequisite for promoting such interdisciplinary research is maintaining, and, where necessary, strengthening a base of support for traditional disciplines across the academy while also allocating resources selectively and strategically to drive interdisciplinary activity. At the same time, the university actively supports the organic development of emerging areas of research activity of various sizes and remains committed to individual academic freedom as a core value of our research activities.

The Western Research Chair (WRC) program was originally conceived to support the Clusters of Research Excellence program. These chairs supported networking and relationship building within Canada and internationally, including with industry and non-academic stakeholders. With the winding down of the Clusters of Research Excellence program, the WRC program has now shifted its focus by creating additional capacity for research, scholarship or creative activity in Western's key areas of research activity, both current and aspirational, while also providing additional capacity for innovation, leadership and collaboration. Administration of the WRC program is governed by a *Letter of Understanding* that forms part of the 2018-2022 Collective Agreement (see Appendix).

The following suite of WRCs acknowledges the various ways Western can impact societal change, Canada's economic growth and advance fundamental research. The WRC program creates additional capacity and high visibility appointments that contribute to Western's strategic objectives. They support networking and relationship-building within Canada, including with the business community and other non-academic partner communities, as well as international relationship-building. Furthermore, the creation of temporary appointments allows for the infusion of new ideas and innovative concepts into Western's research agenda and supports high-impact training opportunities that further enhance Western's reputation as a committed to student success.

There are 5 types of WRCs:

- A. Strategic Focus Chair
- B. Advancing Research Chair
- C. Innovation Chair
- D. Leadership Chair
- E. Visiting Fellow Chair

**Strategic Focus** and **Advancing Research** chairs attract and retain scholars in key areas of research activity; **Innovation** chairs support research partnerships; **Leadership** chairs attract and retain senior leaders for research institutes and major initiatives; and **Visiting Fellow** chairs attract leading scholars for short-term collaborations at Western.

Western is committed to fostering equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization (EDI-D) within the campus community and within our scholarship, teaching and research. Dedicated efforts have been made and will continue towards advancing social justice, sustainability and combating structural inequities in society and within the university. Western is committed to maintain an equitable and diverse representation among WRC holders, and will include targeted calls for underrepresented, equity-deserving groups, if needed.

## WRC Types

### A. Strategic Focus

#### **Purpose**

To attract or retain leading scholars in key areas of research activity.

#### **Targeted level**

Full professors or associate professors who are expected to be promoted to the full professor level within one or two years of the nomination. Nominees from outside the academic sector must possess the necessary qualifications to be appointed at these levels.

#### **Requirements**

- Outstanding and innovative world-class researcher whose accomplishments have made a major impact in their field;
- Recognized internationally as a leader in their field;
- Superior record of attracting and supervising/teaching graduate students and postdoctoral fellows or other students and personnel; and
- Proposing an original, innovative research program of the highest quality.

#### **Duration**

5 years, renewable one time.

#### **Funding**

External appointment may include partial salary support from Western Research as negotiated with the Dean. Both internally and externally appointed chairs will receive a Research Excellence salary stipend for the period of the appointment. The chair may include an alternative workload as negotiated with the Dean, as well as support for a postdoctoral fellow or other research HQP.

## B. Advancing Research

### **Purpose**

To attract or retain emerging scholars in key areas of research activity.

### **Targeted level**

Assistant or Associate Professor.

### **Requirements**

- Emerging scholar, who has received their highest degree within 10 years of nomination. May be longer than 10 years if nominee had career interruptions (generally limited to breaks in the nominee's research career due to maternity or parental leave, extended sick leave, clinical training, and family care);
- Outstanding researcher whose accomplishments are commensurate with their career stage; and
- Proposing an original, innovative research program of high quality.

### **Duration**

5 years, non-renewable.

### **Funding**

External appointment may include partial salary support from Western Research as negotiated with the Dean. Both internally and externally appointed chairs will receive a Research Excellence salary stipend for the period of the appointment. The chair may include an alternative workload as negotiated with the Dean, as well as support for a postdoctoral fellow or other research HQP.

## C. Innovation

### **Purpose**

To support scholars involved in research and partnerships that develop innovative products, services, knowledge exchange, start-ups or technologies.

### **Targeted level**

Internal nominees at the assistant, associate or full professor level.

### **Requirements**

- Research and training record commensurate with experience;
- Recognition with distinction amongst peer group;
- Demonstrated ability to work with industry or other external partners;
- In partnership, proposing a research program or collaboration of high merit that focuses on developing new and innovative products, services, processes, or technologies.

### **Duration**

Up to 2 years based on the requirements of the project, non-renewable.

### **Funding**

Internal appointments only. Research Excellence salary stipend dependent on application and scope of project. May include an alternative workload as negotiated with the Dean.

## D. Leadership

### **Purpose**

To attract or retain senior leaders for research institutes, facilities, or major initiatives.

### **Targeted level**

Leading scholars, either internally or externally appointed.

### **Requirements**

- Evidence of outstanding scholarship and an established international reputation in their field;
- Demonstrated leadership involving financial oversight and fund-raising;
- Demonstrated ability to build and manage effective teams that include multidisciplinary scholars, external partners, and other stakeholders.

### **Duration**

5 years, renewable one time.

### **Funding**

External appointment may include partial salary support from Western Research as negotiated with the Dean. Both internally and externally appointed chairs will receive a Research Excellence salary stipend for the period of the appointment. The chair may include an alternative workload as negotiated with the Dean, as well as support for a postdoctoral fellow or other research HQP.

## E. Visiting Fellow

### **Purpose**

To attract national or international scholars and world class experts to travel to Western and spend 3-6 months working with Western scholars.

### **Targeted level**

External nominees who are at the assistant, associate or full professor level.

### **Requirements**

- Evidence of outstanding scholarship and an established international reputation in their field;
- Demonstration that the visit to Western will foster collaboration and exchanges between Western and their home institution in areas of strategic importance to Western
- The expectation is that after returning to their home countries, Visiting WRCs will continue their collaborations/partnerships, or help create local companies with ties to their Canadian collaborators and Canadian companies (when partnering with Innovation at Western). Option to support accompanying HQP (Program to be developed with Grad School and International).

### **Duration**

3-6 months, non-renewable.

### **Funding**

The WRC will cover travel costs and provide an honorarium.

## Nomination process

All nominees must be championed by the Dean of the supporting faculty or, in the case of Visiting Fellows, a research institute director. Nominees for joint appointed positions must be championed by the Deans of both supporting faculties. For internal nominees, the Dean will submit an application on behalf of a candidate to the WRC Steering Committee via the Vice-President (Research), who then approves nominees based on fit to the program, a minimum score of 75 on the evaluation rubric, and availability of funding. For positions open to external applicants, the Dean or research institute director in the case of Visiting Fellows, will submit the proposed position to the WRC Steering Committee via the Vice-President (Research), who will then approve positions based on the fit to the program, score on the evaluation rubric, and availability of funding. A formal search will then be conducted to identify a preferred nominee as articulated in UWOFA CA Letter of Understanding (see Appendix).

A nomination package will include:

1. CV for the nominee
2. Proposal describing the research, scholarship, or creative activity to be supported by the WRC. Proposals should clearly demonstrate a commitment to EDI-D within the research, research team, HQP and training, mentorship, outreach, evaluation, and/or as part of the knowledge exchange and dissemination.
3. Letter of support from the sponsoring Dean or research institute director, in the case of Visiting Fellows, indicating the WRC type, addressing fit with the WRC program, and the merit of the nominee.

## Evaluation

Applications for all WRCs will be adjudicated by senior leadership of Western Research. Applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis based on the availability of the funding allocated to the program. To be considered, nominees will need to achieve a minimum score of 75 based on the WRC Evaluation Rubric (See Rubric below). Positions are dependent on budgetary approval.

Western University recognizes that our commitment to EDI-D is central to the university's mandate and that our pursuit of research excellence and our commitment to EDI-D are mutually supporting. As such, Western Research is committed to achieving and maintaining an equitable and diverse representation, for example as detailed by the CRC's four designated groups, amongst our Western Research Chairs. Western Research will evaluate the representation of designated groups on an ongoing basis and may institute targeted calls for underrepresented, equity-deserving groups, if needed.

## Western Research Chair (WRC) Evaluation Rubric

Criterion	Indicators	Score
<b>Excellence of the nominee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CV</li> <li>• Letter of Support</li> </ul>	Relative to career stage, an exceptional scholar whose accomplishments have made a major impact in their field; internationally recognized as a leader or emerging leader in their field; excellent record of attracting and supervising/teaching graduate students and postdoctoral fellows or other students and personnel; strong evidence of translating their research into societal impact; a recipient of prestigious fellowships or awards.	<b>31-40</b>
	Relative to career stage, a strong scholar whose accomplishments have made an above average impact in their field; nationally recognized as a leader or potential leader in their field; above average record of attracting and supervising/teaching graduate students and postdoctoral fellows or other students and personnel; some evidence of translating their research into societal impact; a potential recipient of prestigious fellowships or awards in the near-future.	<b>21-30</b>
	Relative to career stage, a scholar with a reasonable record of accomplishment and clear evidence of impact in their field.	<b>11-20</b>
	Relative to career stage, a scholar whose research excellence is not clearly evidenced.	<b>0-10</b>
<b>Mentorship and EDI-D</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CV</li> <li>• Proposal</li> </ul>	Strong record of research promotion, outreach, mentorship and leadership; meaningful integration of EDI-D considerations and practices across the proposed activities and/or research life cycle; nominee will advance Western's commitment to equitable and diverse research teams and facilitate a supportive and inclusive research environment (eg., research and teaching practices, physical space, meeting times etc.).	<b>11-20</b>
	Mentorship and commitment to EDI-D are not clearly evidenced.	<b>0-10</b>
<b>Expected impact and fit between the nominee and program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal</li> <li>• Letter of Support</li> </ul>	Exceptional fit and synergy between the nominee and the program. Nominee presents a unique and time-sensitive opportunity to substantially improve Western's capacity in a key area of research activity. Proposed activities are likely to have a major societal impact	<b>31-40</b>
	Strong fit and synergy between the nominee and the program. Nominee presents an above average opportunity to improve Western's capacity in a key area of research activity. Proposed activities are likely to have a high impact in their field.	<b>21-30</b>
	Reasonable fit and synergy between the nominee and the program. Nominee presents an opportunity to improve Western's capacity in an area of research activity, but may not fully address a high-priority institutional need. Proposed activities are likely to have an average impact in their field.	<b>11-20</b>
	Not clearly evidenced	<b>0-10</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>/100</b>

## Appendix: Letter of Understanding regarding Western Research Chairs.

### LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING

### WESTERN RESEARCH CHAIRS

The Parties agree that this Letter of Understanding forms part of the 2018-2022 Collective Agreement for the life of the Collective Agreement.

Whereas the University is providing funding for research chairs in support of areas of research strength, and whereas these research chairs are designated Western Research Chairs, the Parties hereby agree that such chairs will be filled by open competition, and that advertisements, applicants and nominees for such chairs shall be considered by a Search Committee in accord with Clauses 1.7, 1.7.1, 1.7.2, 1.7.3, and 1.7.4 of the Article *Appointments* and the Search Committee provisions of the Article *Appointments* i.e. Clauses 5.13, 5.13.1, 5.13.2, 5.14, 5.14.1, and 5.14.2.