

2021 Western Postdoctoral Fellowships Program Guidelines

1 OVERVIEW

Western's Postdoctoral Fellowships Program provides funding to the very best postdoctoral applicants, nationally and internationally, who will contribute positively to research excellence at the university and help advance Western's strategic research plan.

The Postdoctoral Fellowships Program's objectives are to:

- Attract top-tier postdoctoral talent, nationally and internationally;
- Develop their leadership potential; and
- Position them for success as tomorrow's research leaders.

Western Research, on behalf of the Vice-President (Research), invites applications from all eligible individuals for Western's Postdoctoral Fellowships Program. This program is funded by Western University and administered by Research Development & Services (RD&S).

1.1 Aims and Priorities

- **Research Excellence:** Promote outstanding research aligned with Western's strategic mission and values;
- **Recruitment:** Attract new top-tier 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; and,
- **Collaboration:** Foster collaboration between Western's independent investigators across various disciplines through postdoctoral research, supervision, and training.

1.2 Guiding Principles

The program seeks to support the very best postdoctoral applicants nationally and internationally, while taking into consideration:

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

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- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):** Western is committed to supporting high-quality research projects involving designated groups that adhere to all relevant EDI principles, 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](#)); and
- **Promoting Indigenous Research:** Western is committed to supporting high-quality research projects by and/or with Indigenous Peoples (as outlined in Western's [Indigenous Strategic Plan: Goal 4 - Achieve Excellence in Indigenous Research & Scholarship](#)) that use either community-engagement research methodology, or traditional disciplinary methodologies.

1.3 Value and Allocation

1.3.1 Value

Up to 11 Fellowships are available for the 2021 competition. Fellowships will provide a minimum stipend of \$45,000/year, 13% benefits, and a 1.5% stipend increase in year 2, for a total value of \$102,464 over 2 years.

Western Research will contribute up to 50% of the Fellowship cost, for a total maximum contribution of \$51,232 over 2 years. The host Faculty and/or supervisor are responsible for securing the remaining 50% of costs. Faculties will additionally be responsible for paying out any unused vacation.

Western Research recognizes that the level of funding deemed competitive for attracting postdoctoral scholars may vary by discipline and may also vary annually within disciplines according to shifts in job market supply and demand. Supervisors and Faculties are free to offer total stipends above \$45,000/year, if they have the funding to do so. **The maximum amount of funding that will be provided by Western Research remains \$51,232 over two years even if the supervisor or Faculty contributes more.**

In a limited number of cases, Western Research may consider funding up to 100% of the Fellowship, to a maximum of \$102,464 total costs over two years, based on demonstrated need and lack of available matching funding. In partnership with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and the Office of the Provost & Vice-President (Academic), matching funds for an Indigenous Western Postdoctoral Fellowship will not be required from the Faculty or supervisor and will be provided by the Office of the Provost & Vice-President Academic.

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

Note: This funding is intended to allow recipients to conduct research-intensive projects. Western Research may consider applications where the proposed Fellowship is reduced proportionally to include remunerated teaching, on a case-by-case basis in consultation with SGPS.

1.3.2 External funding sources

Western Postdoctoral Fellows are encouraged to continue to seek sources of external postdoctoral funding such as Tri-Council Postdoctoral Fellowships. In the event that a Western Postdoctoral Fellow is successful in securing an external Fellowship that provides salary support during the term of their Western Postdoctoral Fellowship, Western Research and the host Faculty will provide for the duration of the external fellowship or the remaining duration of the Western Postdoctoral Fellowship (whichever is shorter) the greater of: 1) a stipend top-up of \$10,000 per year, or 2) a stipend top up to \$55,000/year. The top-up funding will be pro-rated for the remaining term of the 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 (or other sources of matching funds).

1.3.3 Allocation

- Each Faculty will be allocated a minimum of one fellowship
- Through a partnership with the [Office of Indigenous Initiatives](#) and in support of the goals of Western's [Indigenous Strategic Plan](#), at least one of the fellowships awarded will be an Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship reserved for outstanding scholars who meet at least one of the following eligibility criteria:
 - Scholars who self-identify as Indigenous and provide supporting documentation;
 - Scholars who will complete the Fellowship under the supervision of an Indigenous faculty member; or
 - Scholars who will undertake Indigenous Research in the course of the Fellowship.

See Section 2.1.2 for further details.

Preference may be given to Indigenous scholars who will undertake high-quality research that has the potential of advancing excellence in Indigenous Research.

1.3.4 Project time period

- Funding for successful applications will begin on a mutually agreed upon date between **January 1, 2021 and May 1, 2021**. Permission for a start date later than May 1, 2021 may be granted in special circumstances; applicants and/or their supervisors should consult with Western Research.
- Funding will last for a period of two years from the funding start date.

2 ELIGIBILITY

2.1.1 General Eligibility- All Applicants

- Western University guidelines on Postdoctoral Scholars can be found here: https://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral_services/index.html.
- The applicant's PhD must have been granted (official convocation/graduation date) within three (3) years prior to the proposed start date of the Postdoctoral Fellowship. All PhD requirements must have been met by the start date of the award.
- Applicants who received their PhD before more than three (3) years prior to the proposed start date and who have experienced circumstances or interruptions that have affected their research projects, professional career, or academic achievement since

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receiving their PhD are also eligible to apply. Applicants will have to provide additional details outlining the nature and dates of these circumstances.

- Relevant circumstances may include: parental leave, child-rearing, illness, disability, cultural or community responsibilities, socioeconomic context, or health-related family responsibilities.
- Research interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are recognized as, and may be counted as, an eligible delay.
- Preference may be given to applicants who received their PhD from institutions other than Western University. (No distinctions will be made for earlier degrees, and applicants who received an undergraduate and/or Master's degree from Western are eligible to apply.)
- 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.
- Applicants **cannot** currently hold a permanent faculty position, or a faculty position leading to permanency.
- Successful applicants **cannot** hold a postdoctoral position at another institution for the duration of 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.
- Applicants must secure written commitment of a qualified faculty member at Western who has the expertise, experience, and capacity to act as the Principal 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.
- 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.

2.1.2 Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship Eligibility

- Applicants who self-identify as Indigenous should provide supporting documentation in confidence to indigenouinitatives@uwo.ca at the time of application. Indigenous documentation includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - A copy of a Certificate of “Indian Status” or Treaty card;
 - A certified copy of a Nunavut Trust Certificate card, roll number, or any other proof accepted by Inuit communities;
 - A certified copy of membership card in a Métis registry recognized by the Métis National Council (e.g. Métis Nation of Ontario, the Manitoba Métis Federation, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, the Métis Nation of Alberta, the Métis Nation British Columbia);

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- Written confirmation of Indigenous ancestry from the Department of Indigenous Affairs Canada;
- Written confirmation of membership in a band council which has its own membership code;
- Under extenuating circumstances (e.g., adoption, 60's Scoop, Foster care) Indigenous applicants are encouraged to contact the VP/AVP Indigenous Initiatives to discuss their options.
- Applicants conducting Indigenous Research in the course of the Fellowship should refer to the following definition:
 - **Indigenous Research:** refers to research in any field or discipline that is conducted by, grounded in or engaged with First Nations, Inuit, Métis or other Indigenous nations, communities, societies or individuals, and their wisdom, cultures, experiences or knowledge systems, as expressed in their dynamic forms, past and present. Indigenous Research can embrace the intellectual, physical, emotional and/or spiritual dimensions of knowledge in creative and interconnected relationships with people, places and the natural environment. Indigenous Research occurs by and with Indigenous peoples and communities emphasizes and values their existing strengths, assets and knowledge systems. Whatever the methodologies or perspectives that apply in a given context, researchers who conduct Indigenous Research, whether they are Indigenous or non-Indigenous themselves, commit to respectful relationships with all Indigenous peoples and communities. (Indigenous Research Sub-Committee, “Final Report and Proposed Strategy: Strengthening our Relations to grow the capacity and impact of Western’s Indigenous Research Environment,” 5 June 2021).
- Applicants should refer to the Collective Agreement’s Letter of Understanding for Indigenous Faculty for relevant definitions:
https://www.uwo.ca/facultyrelations/faculty_relations/faculty/LOU---Indigenous-Faculty-Members---AODA-check-website.pdf
- Applicants eligible for the Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship should complete the relevant page of the application form and should ensure that one of their Referees providing a Letter of Support is from a member of an Indigenous community or organization who can provide relevant and supportive information.
- Questions about eligibility for the Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship may be directed to indigenouinitatives@uwo.ca.

3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated and ranked by individual faculties based on the following three criteria¹:

1. **Demonstrated and potential research excellence and leadership**

¹ Evaluation criteria adapted from the [Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship evaluation criteria](#)

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The applicant should have demonstrated capacity for research excellence based on track record as defined by 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 could include, but are not limited to:

- Research history
- Impact of their activities in the research community
- The applicant's level of influence according to the following spheres of impact:
 - research programs
 - institutions (e.g. research, cultural)
 - research communities (e.g. local, international)
 - society at large (e.g. regional, national)
- The stage and nature of the applicant's career path

2. Quality of applicant's proposed research program

The application should provide evidence of excellence in terms 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 could include, but are not limited to:

- The quality of the proposal in terms of its novelty/originality, feasibility, and significance
- The environment in which the proposed research will be conducted
- If applicable, considerations of sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA+) included in the research design
- If applicable, community engagement for research respectfully involving Indigenous peoples

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 could 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
- 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
- Alignment and synergy between the applicant's research ambitions and the strategic priorities of Western and/or the host Faculty

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- 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 supervisor

4 **SUBMISSIONS**

The **Postdoctoral Fellow applicant** must submit a complete Postdoctoral Fellowships Program application form with the following required attachments:

- Letters of support from three (3) referees;
- Research Project Proposal (4 pages max.);
- Bibliography/References (2 pages max.);
- Canadian Common CV for the Postdoctoral scholar;
- Most significant contributions (1 page max.); and
- Proof of PhD.

See application form for full details.

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

- Complete (i.e., all relevant fields are populated including the fields for identifying the source of the required matching funds);
- Consistent with the application form; and
- Approved by all relevant parties through the ROLA proposal system.

Research Development & Services, 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 faculties for consideration.

ROLA proposals must be submitted by November 5, five business days before the application deadline.

All applications must be received **no later than Tuesday November 9 at 4:00 p.m. (Eastern)**. Email application materials to intgrant@uwo.ca No late submissions will be accepted.

5 **ADJUDICATION**

Applications eligible for the Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship will be adjudicated by a committee appointed by the Vice-Provost & Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Initiatives). This committee will have broad and appropriate representation and be composed of individuals with expertise in Indigenous initiatives, Indigenous community members, and/or other experts. Any eligible applications not selected for the Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellowship will remain in the applicant pool for assessment by Faculties.

Each Faculty will be asked to review, rank, and provide feedback on all applications for which theirs is the home Faculty for the primary faculty supervisor. Applications will be distributed to Faculties, who will review the applications against the program evaluation criteria and select and

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recommend their top three candidates to the Vice-President (Research). Final decisions on applicants selected for funding will be made by the Vice-President (Research) or delegate.

In ranking proposals, Faculties are expected to implement all relevant principles of Western's [EDI Action Plan](#) to the evaluation of all applications. Additionally, review of proposals including research by, or with, Indigenous peoples will ensure compliance with the Government of Canada's Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics guidelines published in [TCPS 2 - Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#). Faculties will also ensure that all proposals follow [The First Nations Principles of OCAP](#).

6 **FINAL REPORTS**

- Within six months of the award's termination, awardees must email a final report to RD&S at intgrant@uwo.ca
- Final report forms are available to download from:

<http://www.uwo.ca/research/funding/internal/index.html>

7 **EQUITY & DIVERSITY SURVEY**

Applicants are encouraged to complete an Equity & Diversity Survey found on the Western Research website. This survey is completely voluntary, will not be used in the evaluation and adjudication process, and will be used for educational, statistical, and administrative purposes only. Survey information will be held by Western Research staff only in order to maintain confidentiality, and only aggregate data will be shared outside of Western Research.