

Western Research Excellence Awards 2026

Research in the academic setting - the discovery and integration of diverse epistemological perspectives and tools, the development of new theory and concepts, and creative work in all its formats - is one of the defining hallmarks of an excellent university. Western University boasts numerous faculty members with national and international reputations for their significant contributions to research, scholarship, and creative activity. Often, these contributions are not fully recognized outside of the apparent boundaries of the discipline.

The Western Research Excellence Awards provide a way for members of the Western community to recognize and celebrate Western faculty members at all career stages for their exceptional achievements in research, scholarship, and/or creative activity.

Western University recognizes the responsibility and potential for research to significantly contribute to a more equitable, just, and inclusive society. The Western Research Excellence Awards embed advancement of equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization, and accessibility (EDIDA) in the research ecosystem as a central area of celebration.

Three categories of awards are offered:

1. **Western Research Excellence Award - Outstanding Emerging Scholar** recognizes faculty members at the Assistant Professor level who have demonstrated meaningful and impactful research, scholarly accomplishments, and/or creative activity in the early stages of their career and show great future promise for excellence and impact in their discipline and/or broader society.
2. **Western Research Excellence Award - Outstanding Scholar** recognizes faculty members at the Associate Professor level who have produced exceptional research, scholarly, and/or creative contributions and have clear potential for ongoing excellence, significance, and impact in their discipline and/or broader society.
3. **Hellmuth Prize for Achievement in Research** recognizes faculty members at the full Professor level who are world-class scholars with a long and substantial body of work, who have demonstrated sustained research, creative, and/or scholarly leadership and excellence, and whose ideas and research outputs have made enduring contributions and impacts to their discipline and/or on broader society.

Two awards in each category are offered annually: one in the area broadly defined as the natural sciences, engineering, and health (research that would be supported by NSERC and CIHR) and one in the social sciences, arts, and humanities (research that would in general fall under the mandate of SSHRC). There are roughly equal numbers of faculty members in each of these areas.

The Western Research Excellence Awards, consisting of a plaque and a research award, will be presented at an annual public ceremony. A one-time award of \$5,000 for *Outstanding Emerging* and *Outstanding Scholars* and \$10,000 for *Hellmuth Prize* awardees is provided in an unrestricted research account.

Eligibility

Nominees must have a full-time (limited term/tenure-track/tenured) research-eligible appointment at Western. Nominees for Outstanding Lifetime Achievement at Professor Emeritus rank may be considered but must be currently active in research, scholarship, and/or creative activity. Western Research Excellence Award winners are eligible to be nominated for later stage categories in the future, but not for another Western Research Excellence Award from the same category. Former Hellmuth Prize recipients are not eligible for nomination.

Nominations

Each Faculty or School may submit up to one nomination in each of the three award categories. The Faculty or School may develop internal procedures for the selection of its nominees. Internal selection procedures must integrate consideration of EDIDA, knowledge exchange, and impact.

In all cases, it should be assumed that the nominations will be read and evaluated by a multidisciplinary committee and may not be authorities in the nominee's field.

The Nomination Dossier/Form will contain the following mandatory components. If you have questions, please contact rwprizes@uwo.ca for assistance:

1. A Cover Letter (maximum one page), signed by the Dean, briefly introducing the nominee, identifying the award and category to which they are being nominated (either research that would be supported by NSERC and CIHR or research that would, in general, fall under the mandate of SSHRC), and summarizing the significance of their research, scholarship, and/or creative activity.
2. A Nomination Rationale (maximum three pages) including:
 - A narrative of the nominee's research and scholarly career, indicating why they are deserving of the Award. The narrative should **not** be a biography or chronology, but rather an impact statement.
 - An outline of why the nominee's work is outstanding within the context of the norms of the field.
 - Evidence of the significance, impact, and innovation of the nominee's research, scholarship, and/or creative activity, and their reputation at a national and/or international level (as appropriate for career stage).
 - A description of their contributions to advancing EDIDA in the research, scholarship and/or creative ecosystems.
 - May include links to online materials.
3. A Lay Summary (maximum 100 words), primarily used for promotional material.

4. Up to three Letters of Support (maximum three pages each):
 - Letters should be from experts outside of Western who are able to speak to the significance and impact of the nominee's research, scholarship, and/or creative activity, and reach beyond the university (as appropriate for career stage). The experts should be objective but need not be arms-length.
 - Letterhead and signature of the referee is required
5. A Current Lifetime CV (of any length and format appropriate to the discipline) that includes a list of publications and other scholarly or creative outputs.

Formatting Requirements for Attachments

- Pages must be 8 ½" x 11" (216mm x 279mm).
- Insert a minimum margin of 2 cm (¾ inch) around the page (top, bottom, and sides).
- Text can be either single or double-spaced.
- Use a minimum font size of 11 (Arial or Times New Roman) with no condensed type.
- In the header of each page, indicate the title of the document (e.g. Cover Letter) in the top left and the name of the nominee in the top right.

EDID Supports

Dedicated support and resources for Indigenous research and Equity Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization in research are available through the [Inclusive Research Excellence and Impact team](#). You can complete a [request for support form](#) to receive more information or book a consultation. If you are unsure if your project involves Indigenous research, it is recommended that you contact the team early for determination and support.

Submission

Nominations must be received by Western Research by **March 20, 2026 at 5p.m. ET**. Each nomination file must be uploaded into one PDF document and emailed directly to rwprizes@uwo.ca.

Adjudication

A selection committee, chaired by the Vice President (Research) or designate, will choose the recipients of the Western Research Excellence Awards from the nominees. The committee composition will be selected from the [Western College of Reviewers](#) to ensure that members represent an appropriate balance across broad research and scholarly disciplines. All members must have undertaken the Bias in Peer Review training offered by the CRC/Tri-councils and the Building Inclusivity Through Anti-Racism module by Western's EDI Office prior to adjudication.

Evaluation Criteria

Nominations will be assessed using the following criteria:

1. Quality and scope of research, scholarly, and/or creative activity achievements, taking into account the norms of the field of study and the nominee's career stage.
2. Contribution of ideas and research results to their discipline and/or impacts on broader society.
3. Contribution to advancing EDIDA in the work and/or people associated with their research, scholarship, and/or creative activity.
4. National and international stature, as appropriate for the nominee's career stage.
5. Future promise and potential for ongoing excellence and impact, where appropriate.

To ensure excellence, the Selection Committee may elect *not* to award one or more of the six Western Research Excellence Awards each year.