

WESTERN POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP Program Guidelines 2026

OVERVIEW

The prestigious Western Postdoctoral Fellowship Program awards funding to a 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 and the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will be jointly administering the program, which is 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](#).

Individual postdoctoral applicants may only submit one application to this competition. Host supervisors may submit more than one application as host supervisor for this competition,

however a maximum of one grant will be awarded per host supervisor. If a host supervisor has two more highly ranked applications that have the potential to be funded, the review committee reserves the right to decide which application (if any) will be awarded to the host supervisor.

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.

1.2 Award Period and Duration

Funding for successful applications will begin on a mutually agreed upon start date between the supervisor and postdoc, typically within the July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 timeframe.

Funding will be awarded for a period of two years from the funding start date. Successful applicants 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. Applicants who are currently affiliated with Western University as a graduate student (not as a postdoc) may apply to this program and must justify their request by describing their existing association with Western University and provide a strong justification to support this request (see application for details).

Applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- 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** “hold or be on leave from a tenure-track or tenured faculty position. Generally, “tenure or tenure-track” refers to an open-ended academic position in which the holder can form a research group, apply for externally funded research as a principal investigator and teach”.¹
- e. Successful applicants **cannot** hold another postdoctoral position at Western or any other 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 Harmos (mharmos@uwo.ca) for any immigration or appointment-related issues.
- i. All applications will be subject to a research security review to ensure compliance with provincial and federal government policies, including:
 - [National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships \(NSGRP\)](#)
 - [Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern \(STRAC\)](#)

2.1 Subject Matter

Applications 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

¹ [Canada Postdoctoral Research Award program](#), 2026
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proposals:

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

3.0 Adjudication

Eligible applications will be forwarded for review to the selection committee. This committee will consist of broad and appropriate representation from the College of Reviewers plus any content area experts (e.g., Indigenous Research Specialists) who are needed to review specific applications, and will be chaired by an 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.

After the adjudication process is complete, applications will undergo a research security review to ensure the application meets federal and provincial security requirements as noted in the above 2.0 Eligibility section. The Research Security team will reach out via email to any supervisor where there are research security issues to be addressed. All issues must be addressed and resolved within a one-week period. Any applications with outstanding concerns after deadline has passed from the initial Research Security team outreach will be considered ineligible.

3.1 Adjudication Criteria

In evaluating proposals, the selection committee will apply the program adjudication rubric (see Criteria listed below). The rubric focuses on research excellence and leadership potential, quality and feasibility of the project, strategic alignment and synergy with researcher and institutional goals, and 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](#), and should incorporate the information and guidance available on [Western Research's website on Indigenous Research](#).

Applications will be evaluated based on the following three criteria:

Criteria 1: Research Excellence and Leadership Potential

The applicant should have demonstrated capacity for research impact, leadership, and commitment to EDID principles.

- **Demonstrated Research Impact:** Quality and influence of past research contributions within and beyond academia.
- **Leadership Indicators:** Evidence of mentorship, capacity building, and engagement with diverse research communities.
- **Community Integration:** Long-term collaboration and reciprocity with relevant communities or stakeholders.
- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization (EDID):** Commitment to advancing EDID principles in research and leadership.

Criteria 2: Quality and Feasibility of Proposed Research

The application should provide evidence of originality, significance, feasibility, and integration of EDI and ethical considerations in the proposed research.

- **Novelty and Significance:** Originality and potential impact of the proposed research.
- **Feasibility and Environment:** Practicality of the research plan and suitability of the research environment, including accessibility and inclusion.
- **EDI Integration:** Clear strategies for incorporating EDI considerations and addressing systemic barriers.
- **Responsible Engagement:** Respectful inclusion of Indigenous Peoples (including data, resources, and/or perspectives, if applicable) and diverse groups, following the axiom “nothing about us, without us”, ethical guidelines, and best practices.

Criteria 3: Strategic Alignment and Synergy

The application should establish the alignment between the applicant’s research and the supervisor’s program, institutional benefit, and pathway to independence.

- **Supervisor Commitment:** Evidence of strong mentorship and professional development opportunities.
- **Research Alignment:** Complementarity between applicant’s research vision and supervisor’s program.
- **Institutional Benefit:** Potential to enhance research capacity and strategic priorities of the host institution.
- **Path to Independence:** How the fellowship will position the applicant as an emerging research leader.

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:

February 2026	WPDF Program Launch
April 7, 2026	ROLA Deadline
April 14, 2026, 3pm EDT	Application Deadline (including Reference Letters)
April-May 2026	Selection Committee Review
May-June 2026	Communication of Results
July 2026 – June 2027	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 7, 2026**.

Please contact rolahelp@uwo.ca if assistance required.

Please note:

- Late and/or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.
- Western Research, in consultation with an Associate Vice-President (Research), reserves the

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.

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:

- Top candidates will undergo a research security review from Western's Research Security team. Supervisors will be provided a deadline to respond to any questions or concerns.
- 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 and supervisor do not address any research security concerns by the stated deadline, the position will return to Western Research and be reallocated according to program criteria.
- b. If a candidate declines the position before September 1, 2026, the position will return to Western Research and be reallocated according to program criteria.
- c. If a candidate who had previously accepted an award later declines the position after September 1, 2026, the funding allocated to that PDF position will be returned to the source.
- d. If a candidate takes up their award and resigns after their start date, any remaining funds will be returned to the source.
- e. 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](#).

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 jointly administered by the Office of Research Services, Western Research and the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. For assistance, please contact internal grants: intgrant@uwo.ca or Mihaela Harnos, Postdoctoral Services Coordinator (mharnos@uwo.ca).

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.