ADVANCE 2 MARKET FUND
AN INTERNALLY FUNDED INNOVATION COMPETITION

1. OVERVIEW

The Advance 2 Market Fund (A2M) awards are made from funds provided by the Office of the Vice-President (Research). They are intended to support the cost of projects that will advance innovative research results towards application and commercialization and to provide an incentive to validate and develop commercial opportunities for the investigator's research. The competitions are for one-time projects based on existing research initiatives. Applicants can only receive one grant per type of project or technology.

Normally, projects are based on a technology, a concept, a process, or an artistic piece that has been disclosed to Western's Technology Transfer Office (TTO) by way of a Report of Invention (ROI) (see Section 6 for information on required forms). Other categories of projects, such as copyrighted material, will also be appended to an ROI.

Projects are expected to be of short duration (6-12 months) and designed to advance the technology readiness level of the invention. They are also expected to bridge the gap between research results and existing proof of principle grants such as the CIHR Project Grant Program or the NSERC i2i programs. The applicant will have to demonstrate the need in the marketplace, validated through direct engagement with potential customers, as well as a method to meet that need, i.e. a commercialization plan.

Funding of up to $100,000 is available; awards are at the discretion of the review committee. General conditions governing eligibility to apply, supportable research fields, and use of grant funds will be in conformity with Tri-Council guidelines. This funding is repayable only if there is a positive commercial outcome, similar to the way patent expenses, and other soft costs incurred by Western towards commercialization would be.

All applicants are encouraged to take advantage of the optional training that will be offered for all applicants to help develop a commercialization plan and presentation. Applications and presentations will be evaluated on how the work supports the intended commercialization strategy by the Review Committee.

Each application must present a well-substantiated rationale for the proposed work, define specific objectives and measurable key results with corresponding timelines, articulate the innovation pathway, and provide a comprehensive budget detailing the allocation of requested funds. Western's New Ventures team and the assigned Business Development Manager (BDM) from the Western TTO are available to assist with the structuring of the application or for consultation on issues related to intellectual property, marketing intelligence and commercialization strategy.

To begin the application process, a Letter of Intent (LOI) and a Report of Invention (ROI) must be submitted for review. Eligible applicants whose technology has been accepted by the Technology Transfer Office will be invited to submit a full application. All applications must include a ROLA proposal

submission; Chair and Dean signatures are required on the application form, and ROLA approvals must be complete (see Section 6.3.2).

2. ADMINISTRATION

The A2M competition is administered by the Western Technology Transfer Office and New Ventures.

All completed LOIs and Application Forms must be submitted online. Original ROI submissions are forwarded directly to the Technology Transfer Office through the Inventors Portal. Questions regarding the program should be directed to nvprograms@uwo.ca.

3. ADJUDICATION

The Review Committee, comprised of experienced business leaders in technology commercialization, will act as A2M adjudicators and advisors to the Director of New Ventures and Director of the Western Technology Transfer Office, on behalf of the Vice-President (Research). The Directors will sit as ex-officio members throughout the A2M review committee process. Selected applications will be subjected to review by business leaders and professionals with expertise in technology transfer and commercialization.

Where the number of applications received exceeds the number of presentation spots, an internal screening committee comprised of the Director of New Ventures, the Director of the Western Technology Transfer Office and a representative of the Morrissette Institute for Entrepreneurship will score the applications against the selection criteria in Section 5 and determine which applications advance to the Review Committee.

The top six applications will be invited to deliver a presentation to the Review Committee. Each presenter will be allotted five minutes to outline their project, followed by a question-and-answer session. This event will be generally open to the public.

Presentations must be prepared for a non-confidential audience. Should the assigned Business Development Manager (BDM) at the Western Technology Transfer Office determine that a public presentation may compromise the intellectual property protection strategy, alternative arrangements will be implemented to safeguard the IP. The Review Committee may set conditions on an award, including adjustments to the budget, key results or funding tranches.

4. ELIGIBILITY

To be designated as Principal Investigator (PI) on an internal grant, an applicant must hold an academic appointment with a significant research component at Western University or at one of Western's affiliated university colleges with an additional appointment to Western (either through a Western academic department or the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in the general area of the proposed work) at the time of the application. Professors Emeritus/Emerita may be eligible, depending on their appointment. In order to be named as PI on an internal grant, the applicant must be eligible to hold a research account at Western. All internally funded grants will be administered only at Western University. Should the awardee cease to be a faculty member of the University during the tenure of the award, the award will be cancelled, and all remaining and recoverable monies returned to the common fund.

Researchers at the affiliated research institutes will work through their own Business Development Office and applications will be brought through the Technology Transfer Office to the review committee after all matters relating to inter-institutional sharing have been resolved. The Inter-institutional Sharing Agreement will be appended to the application.

Co-applicants and collaborators must be members of Western University or its affiliated hospital research institutes and are not eligible to receive funding from this grant. Investigators at other institutions, and organizations in the public, private or non-profit sectors, may be listed as Partners.

Types of Projects

This is not an exhaustive list but rather a list of examples of projects that might be proposed, as long as they meet the objectives described above:

- Early or preliminary proof of principle demonstration of an invention with a potential market;
- Refining and implementing industrial designs;
- Conducting field studies or initial activity indications (say in vitro or in vivo);
- Producing samples for commercial or demonstration purposes;
- Building engineering prototypes;
- Performing beta trials;
- Confirming in human cell lines, mechanisms of action discovered in animal models;
- Developing an antibody for a receptor that could be used as a therapeutic;
- Testing the potential of a new software, learnware or multimedia product.

The following parameters are provided to better understand what the Review Committee is looking for in terms of “commercialization readiness.”

Intellectual Property:

- The intellectual property (IP) must be disclosed to and managed by Western’s Technology Transfer Office [see Section 10.1] according to the UWOFA Agreement, with patent or other protection (for example, copyright) underway
- An underlying invention or innovative IP must be fundamental to the project
- If patentable, a prior art search must confirm freedom to operate
- A clear barrier to entry should be described (software may be protected by patent or copyright, depending on the jurisdiction)

Opportunity Assessment:

- There must be a significant application and potential, even if in a niche market
- The need in the marketplace must be clearly illustrated and quantified, together with a competitive analysis
- The need should be validated through direct engagement with potential customers, users or partners

- Impact is not measured by financial return alone. Reviewers will also consider the broader benefits of translating the research into use, including its impact on the people and communities it will serve, and its contribution to Canada's economic and societal well-being and sovereignty

Commercialization Pathway:

- A clear pathway to market must be identified (for example, start-up or license to an existing company)
- A clear development path, including the prototyping stage, costs and a risk analysis, must be proposed
- The scope of work must be aligned with what commercial partners (for example, licensees, investors or end users) would need to see de-risked in order to advance the technology into translation and use
- Potential licensees, partners or other commercialization strategies must be identified, but do not need to have been tested
- The proposal must show how the project will lead to follow-on funding or financing (for example, the CIHR Project Grant Program, NSERC i2i or investment)

5. SELECTION CRITERIA

These are the main parameters that will guide the Review Committee. The applicant will have to demonstrate:

Opportunity Assessment (40%)	• Validation of commercial potential • Third-party interest or partnership to support translation to use • Novelty and inventiveness • Commercial potential and impact for Western and its community (economic and societal benefits are both considered)
Overall Commercialization Plan (40%)	• Clarity of the commercialization pathway and supporting IP strategy • Alignment between the Commercialization Strategy and A2M project plan. How do the objectives and measurable key results stated in the project plan enable the innovation to reach the market
A2M Project Plan (30%)	• Appropriateness of work plan, milestones, deliverables and budget • Justification of the current TRL with evidence of work completed to date, and the advancement in TRL the project will achieve; the work proposed should be work that cannot be funded through current research grant programs • Expertise and capacity of the team to execute the project

An application demonstrating technology readiness for a given market, supported by the work completed to date, will normally receive preference under the A2M program.

6. FORMS

The Report of Invention (ROI) must be submitted through the Inventors Portal. Letters of Intent (LOI) and application forms must be completed and submitted via the correct online form (LOI Form, Application Form). All forms can be found on the Advance 2 Market Fund page of the Research Western website.

6.1 Report of Invention (ROI)

Submitted through the online Inventors Portal on the Research Western website.

6.1.1 ROI

For help in completing the ROI (which captures the essence and circumstances of the invention or creation) and information on the assignment of commercial rights, contact your assigned Business Development Manager at the Technology Transfer Office or email: ipm@uwo.ca. ROI assessments take varying amounts of time; applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their ROI well before the LOI deadline.

6.2 Letter of Intent (LOI)

LOIs must be complete and submitted via the online form.

NOTE: Applicants asked by New Ventures to "resubmit" their full application do not need to submit another LOI (the previously submitted LOI will stand). However, a new ROLA Proposal must be completed and submitted on the Advance 2 Market Fund page on the Office of Research Services website.

The LOI is an expression of interest and is not a competitive review. LOIs should indicate the general scope of the proposed project and must be submitted in order to submit a full application. The LOI allows the Technology Transfer Office to confirm eligibility, assess the technology, and plan training and support. No signatures are required at the LOI stage.

To be invited to submit a full application, the PI must meet the eligibility requirements in Section 4 and the technology must be accepted by the Technology Transfer Office. If the technology assessment is not complete in time, the applicant may be considered in a future round.

6.3 Full Application

Applications must be complete and submitted via the online form.

A representative from Western's New Ventures will contact all applicants who have been invited to submit a full application following the LOI deadline. All applicants are encouraged to take or send a delegate from their research team to take training that will be offered to support the creation of the commercialization plan for the application, but it is not required.

The application form must be completed along with a slide deck to support a presentation to the adjudication panel.

The assigned BDM from the Western Technology Transfer Office will support the application by:

- Providing guidance on a suitable IP strategy through the ROI review (including the disclosure risk to a presentation)
- Reviewing the draft application and presentation assuming they receive the material at least 2 weeks in advance of the deadline

New Ventures will offer practice sessions ahead of the presentation date for any finalist who would like feedback on their presentation.

Slides may be updated after the application deadline; the final version is due by 4 p.m. the day before the event.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that all conditions are met and that the application is complete and submitted electronically via the online form by the required date. Applications considered difficult to read due to photo-reduction or small typeface may be returned without review. CVs, letters of support and other supporting documents are not required and will not be reviewed.

6.3.1 Application submission

Complete application should be submitted via the online form. Written quotes for equipment are the only additional pages accepted and must be inserted at the end of the application.

6.3.2 Research On-line Administration (ROLA) Proposal

Applicants must also complete and submit a ROLA Proposal using the electronic submission process. **Email the complete application to the appropriate contact for ROLA approvals.** The application form must also be signed by the Department Chair and Dean. Applications will not be accepted unless ROLA approvals are complete by the Western Research deadline.

7. HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS, ANIMALS, & BIOHAZARDS

All research proposals involving ethics (human subjects), animal subjects or biohazardous materials must be approved by the appropriate Western certification review committee. Applicants must indicate whether they require approval for the use of human or animal subjects or biohazardous materials on the application form and under the *Certifications* tab of their ROLA proposal. They should also clearly outline when this work happens in the project plan. If awarded, funds will be encumbered, and the work may not commence until appropriate approvals are officially confirmed with the applicable oversight committee(s) and noted in the ROLA grants system. Where certified activities will begin later in the project, a Release of Funds Agreement may be submitted so that other project expenses can proceed. For more information on the certification approval process, please visit the relevant Human Research Ethics, Animal Use, or Bio Hazard websites.

8. FREQUENCY OF APPLICATION

Calls for Letters of Intent will be made once a year. Deadlines can be found on the Advance 2 Market Fund page on the Office of Research Services website. A faculty member may submit one application per

fiscal year to the A2M competition. In addition, applicants can only receive one grant per type of project or technology.

9. PROJECT TIME PERIOD

Grants will be available for a period of up to one year from the starting date. Upon termination of an award, any unspent balance will revert to the common fund. Extensions may be granted in special circumstances. Extension requests must be emailed to the Director of New Ventures (nvprograms@uwo.ca) with the reason for the request. If approved, New Ventures will forward the request to the ISP Administrative Officer, who will update Research Finance.

10. REQUIREMENTS

10.1 Conditions of Acceptance

The technology must be assigned to or managed by Western's Technology Transfer Office prior to release of funds, and any IP developed during the course of the project will have to be diligently reported to the Technology Transfer Office. In addition:

- Any service agreements with external companies must be in place with Western, vetted via Procurement and billed to the University.
- All external consulting reports (e.g., regulatory feedback, engineering designs) must be submitted to the Western Technology Transfer Office.
- Where project results will form part of a funded graduate student's thesis, the PI must coordinate with the Technology Transfer Office to ensure IP is protected before the thesis is submitted or defended.

10.2 Quarterly Meetings

Project status will be reviewed during quarterly meetings scheduled by New Ventures with the technology's assigned BDM, using the key results table submitted in the application. All change requests (for example, to the budget, key results or timelines) must be discussed with the BDM at a quarterly meeting. Extension requests follow the process in Section 9.

10.3 Release of Funds

Awards will be released in tranches of no more than 50% of the total award. Applicants propose the number, size and timing of tranches in the Project Plan. The first tranche will be released at the start of the project. Each subsequent tranche will be released once the Technology Transfer Office confirms that the associated milestone has been achieved. Milestones must be key results from the Project Plan that are objectively measurable and indicate that the project is on track.

Should a milestone not be achieved by its target date, progress will be reviewed at the next quarterly meeting and a revised plan and timeline may be agreed. If the project cannot proceed, remaining tranches will not be released and any unspent funds will revert to the common fund.

10.4 Final Report

Within three (3) months of the termination of the award, awardees must submit one electronic copy of a brief report using the A2M final report template (or ROI if new IP was produced) in Word format to ipm@uwo.ca on what was accomplished during the grant project, including the key results achieved and the technology readiness level reached compared with the target. An email reminder will be sent to you one month prior to this due date. Any new IP resulting from this work must be disclosed to the Technology Transfer Office.

The report template can be found on the Advance 2 Market Fund page on the Office of Research Services website. Failure to participate in the quarterly meetings or complete final reports or to disclose any new IP may jeopardize a faculty member's eligibility for future internally funded competitions.

11. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

For each award, a research account will be established to facilitate the administration and disbursement of funds in accordance with institutional guidelines. Investigators are expected to expend the funds in the manner proposed in the original request. Proposed changes to the budget in excess of 10% of the original award must be discussed with the BDM at a quarterly meeting and are subject to approval. In the event that an award is less than the amount requested, the principal investigator is free to move monies from one category to another to make up a shortfall, but not into categories specifically disallowed by the review committee. Approval for new categories may be granted in special circumstances upon request to the BDM at a quarterly meeting.

11.1 Ineligible Expenses

- Teaching release time
- General computing equipment/software
- Travel not related to commercialization activities

Questions regarding eligible expenses should be directed to the New Ventures team.

12. BUDGET

12.1 Budget Envelope

Budget envelopes will be set at the level granted by the review committee.

12.2 Budget Justification

Each application must include an adequate budget justification. To avoid arbitrary decisions on the appropriate level of funding, detailed explanations of costs must be provided. Costs should align with the objectives and funding tranches in the Project Plan.

12.3 Personnel

Western University will be the employer of any staff hired using project funds; therefore, researchers must pay appropriate wages and include benefits at established rates. To find current benefit charge rates, see Source Deduction Rates on the HR Services website (see Researcher Toolbox).

The employment category for “research assistants/associates” has the widest flexibility in pay levels and is the most difficult in which to determine appropriate levels. Colleagues, your department, or Human Resources can be a good source of information.

The budget justification must include a description of the duties of the personnel requested, the required qualifications, and an explanation as to why the position is necessary for the project. Workload should be shown to justify the amount of time the person will be employed on the project.

Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are eligible. For graduate students, funds may be used for the supervisor-paid portion of the stipend, prorated to the time spent on the project; scholarships, tuition and teaching assistantships are not eligible. The budget justification must state the student’s program and year, expected completion date, time commitment to the project, and how their funding will continue after the award ends. Postdoctoral fellows require an appropriate rationale. Funded time must be tied to the Project Plan, and the same stipend or salary portion may not be charged to another funding source for the same period.

12.4 Equipment

All equipment purchased with internal grant funds becomes the property of Western University. Written quotes, or advertisements giving prices, must accompany the application.

12.5 Supplies & Services

Where applicable, applications must specify the quantity and unit cost of items. Supplier quotations should be included for all purchased services, such as computing or consulting fees.

12.6 Funds for Travel

Travel, including attendance at conferences or trade shows, is eligible only when it directly supports commercialization activities. Travel must be included in the application budget. Evidence that the commercialization activities were completed must be submitted after travel. Requests for travel funds to attend academic conferences will not be accepted.

For more information, or questions relating to the A2M program, please contact the New Ventures Team (nvprograms@uwo.ca).