1. OVERVIEW

Jointly supported by the office of the Vice-President (Research) and the researcher's faculty, the NSERC Discovery Bridge Grant supports established researchers who applied to NSERC's fall Discovery Grant competition and were unsuccessful in being funded (i.e., the Fall 2024 Discovery Grant). The purpose of this funding is to address specific deficiencies in the most recent grant submission, as highlighted in their NSERC Review Panel reports, and increase the likelihood of success in subsequent grant competitions.

The merit of each proposal will be assessed on the applicants plan to address the reviewers' and the NSERC Evaluation Group (EG) panel's comments and the potential for future success in the Discovery competition. Successful applicants **must** submit an external NSERC grant application to one or both of the next two Discovery Grant competitions and are encouraged to also apply for other external support.

One competition will be held per year, with a submission deadline of **April 29, 2025** for this competition. Adjudication will take place in May with awards back dated to April 1st, 2025.

The maximum award value is $50,000 for one year, with $25,000 supported by the Office of the Vice-President (Research) and matched 1:1 by the applicant's Faculty. The award value cannot exceed the annual funding from the applicant's previous NSERC Discovery Grant.

2. ELIGIBILITY

A Principal Investigator (PI) (the applicant) must hold an NSERC-eligible academic appointment with a significant research component at Western University. Should the award recipient 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. All internally funded grants will be administered only at Western.

To be eligible for the NSERC Discovery Bridge Grant, the applicant must:

(1) have a current NSERC Discovery Grant where funding has ended (installments on prior grants have ceased, grants are past the original grant end date, and may be in the automatic extension or Authority to Use Funds [ATUF] year);

(2) have been unsuccessful as Principal Investigator in the Discovery Grant competition in the past year; and

(3) have received a minimum rating of two Strong and no more than one Moderate in any category from NSERC's EG panel for the unsuccessful application (within the past year).

Outstanding final reports must be submitted on any prior completed VPR-funded internal grants before new applications will be considered.

Potential applicants are highly encouraged to meet with their Faculty Research Officer(s) *before* preparing their application to ensure eligibility for the program.

3. SUBMISSIONS

Applications must be submitted to Western Research via the [online submission portal](#) by 3:00pm EDT on the deadline date, April 29, 2025. A corresponding [ROLA proposal](#) must be submitted one week before the competition deadline. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all conditions are met, and that the application is complete and submitted to Western Research as required. **Late, ineligible or incomplete applications will not be accepted.**

4. ADJUDICATION

Applications will be reviewed by the Associate/Assistant Dean Research (ADR) from your faculty and a representative AVPR from Western Research.

Faculties will be asked to rank each proposal using the following scale based on the applicant's ability to address NSERC's review committee feedback and probability for future success in resubmission:

Score	Descriptor
5	Excellent
4	Very Good
3	Good
2	Satisfactory
1	Unsatisfactory

Applications with a score of 4 or 5 will be recommended for funding with final decision from the Office of the VPR. There is no appeal process. All scoring results and review comments are then submitted to Western Research staff in order to process and distribute decision letters to all applicants.

The goal of the program is to fund excellence; there is no guarantee of funding for each application submitted.

5. ETHICS, ANIMAL, & 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 under the *Certifications* tab of their ROLA proposal *and* on the NSERC Discovery Bridge application. If awarded, funds will be encumbered and the work may not commence until appropriate approvals are officially confirmed in ROLA. For more information on the certification approval process, please visit the relevant Ethics, Animal Use or Bio Hazard websites.

6. PROJECT TIME PERIOD

All grants will be available for a period of up to one year and will include an automatic terminal year, where there is an unspent balance. Upon completion of the terminal year, the unspent balance will then revert to the original funding source. Extensions may be considered in special circumstances upon submission of a request to the Office of Research Services, Western Research using the online form. Extension requests must disclose the assigned research grant number, an explanation for why funds could not be spent within the grant period, a budget justification on how remaining funds would used, and the length of extension required (1-year maximum).

7. FINAL REPORTS

Within three months of the termination of the award, awardees must submit a final report using an online form available on the Western Research internal grants website.

Outstanding final reports must be submitted on any prior completed VPR-funded internal grants before new applications will be considered.

8. **BUDGET**

   All budget items must comply with Tri-Agency policies, the [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](#) and the specific guidelines outlined in this document.

   Budget request cannot exceed the annual instalment received from NSERC for the current Discovery Grant project, up to a maximum of $50,000.

   8.1 Budget Justification

   An adequate budget justification must be included in the application. Funding must be used to support the continuation of the original research program for the current fiscal year. To avoid arbitrary decisions on the appropriate level of funding, detailed explanations of costs must be provided.

   8.2 Eligible Expenses:

   Eligible funds are reserved for existing student and trainee stipends plus costs associated with conducting their research, including field research. Project budgets are expected to be allocated to *support current HQP* who were directly involved with the research program from the previous Discovery Grant.

   Expenses related to existing HQP support, research expenses and travel for field research will be eligible.

   8.2 Ineligible Expenses:

   - Stipends for new HQP not currently funded from the existing NSERC project
   - Professional development, conference registration and travel;
   - Travel to workshops, meetings, learned societies or other association meetings;
   - Faculty salaries; and
   - Research Time Stipends (Faculty)

9. QUESTIONS

Internal funding opportunities are administered by the Office of Research Services, Western Research, Room 5150, Support Services Building. Please direct questions to: intgrant@uwo.ca.

APPENDIX

NSERC's Review Procedures and Selection Criteria

Successful applications must meet a high standard of quality on the following three equally weighted selection criteria:

- Scientific or engineering excellence of the researcher;
- Merit of the proposal;
- Contributions to the training of highly qualified personnel (HQP).

The onus is on applicants to address the criteria listed above explicitly in their application. As part of an ongoing commitment to ensure that a wide range of contributions are considered and valued in the merit review, the new Guidelines on the assessment of contributions to research, training and mentoring will support the evaluation of NSERC applications.

Resources

- Discovery Grants Competition Results and Statistics
- Discovery Grants Program
- Equity, diversity and inclusion
- List of Evaluation Groups and Research Topics
- Merit Indicators
- Peer Review Manuals
- Q&A Sessions
- Research Portal
- Resource Videos
- Review Committees