

## WIN Translational Postdoctoral Fellow Research Award Guidelines

### Overview & Objective

The Western Institute for Neuroscience (WIN) Executive Committee invites a basic scientist and clinician to identify a postdoctoral scholar working in neuroscience research for the Translational Postdoctoral Fellow Research Award. WIN will award up to 3 one-year fellowship research awards for this competition round that can be used for salary or research expenses. Individual awards provide up to a maximum of \$30,000 to support expenses related to the postdoctoral fellow's project, which will be supplemented or matched of a comparable value by existing funds (i.e., tri-council awards, foundation funds) from the host Faculty and/or supervisor(s).

**APPLICABILITY:** The Western Institute for Neuroscience (WIN) Translational Postdoctoral Fellow Research Award is designed to strengthen the vital connection between basic and clinical neuroscientists. Fellows will spend some of their time working in clinical settings, but the majority of their time will be focused on research. Fellows may hold a PhD or a clinical degree (MD, OT, RN, etc) to be eligible.

In the clinical setting, the fellows will gain direct experience working side-by-side with clinical faculty (e.g., audiology, speech pathology, dentistry, neurology, psychiatry, medicine, radiology, pediatrics, anesthesiology and/or physical medicine and rehabilitation). Possible clinical locations include the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry, London Health Sciences Centre, Children's Hospital at London Health Sciences Centre, Parkwood Institute, St. Joseph's Health Care, and community clinics. In the basic research setting, the fellows will gain experience working with research experts (investigators, technical staff, other trainees, etc.) in one or more of Western's state-of-the-art core facilities and innovation platforms for neuroscience research.

WIN invites applications from all eligible individuals and 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 "[Canada Research Chair Program – Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan](#)").

### IMPORTANT DATES:

Call for Submissions:	By April 3, 2023
Full Applications Due:	May 15, 2023
Anticipated Decision Date:	June 30, 2023
Anticipated Funding Period (start-date to end-date):	September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2024
Final Report:	By end of award period

## Proposal Submission

The applicant must submit a complete [Postdoctoral Fellow Application Form](#). Before submitting, please read through the guidelines and ensure all required information and documents are prepared.

- **Biosketches** from the postdoc and both supervisors (2-4 pages max)  
The postdoctoral candidate and both supervisors are required to provide NIH-type Biographical Sketches. If relevant, at the end of each Biosketch (in one-half page or less) postdoctoral candidates may describe any career interruptions (with relevant dates) or extenuating factors that have impacted their research or clinical training. If the postdoctoral candidate's PhD was completed more than 3 years ago, or professional health degree completed more than 10 years ago, please explain why further training via the WIN clinical research/postdoctoral fellowships will be valuable. Biosketches must be pdfs.
- **Confirmation of Clinical Commitment**  
The clinical and basic supervisors and the Clinical Department Chair must confirm that the postdoctoral candidate for this Fellowship will participate in clinical activities restricted to no more than 20% of the applicant's time for the duration of the award. Applicants must submit a brief letter with this statement signed by both supervisors and the relevant department chair(s). The signed letter must be uploaded to the application as a pdf.
- **2 Letters of Reference** (2 pages max)  
Applicants must submit 2 letters of reference supporting the postdoctoral candidate's potential for a clinical, academic research career and qualifications for the scholarship. Letters must be uploaded as pdfs.

The first letter must be a joint letter from the two proposed supervisors (clinical and basic). The letter should specifically indicate:

- How the proposed research fits into the mentors' research and clinical programs
- Expertise and experience in the area of research proposed and the nature of the mentors' proposed time commitment to the supervision and training of the applicant
- Mentors' prior experience in the supervision, training, and successful mentoring of clinician scientists
- Potential for applicant's future research career and comparison of applicant amongst others the mentors have trained.
- Provide confirmation of matched funding from the candidate's home department or other funding source.

The second letter must be from a prior supervisor (clinical or research) supporting the postdoctoral candidate's potential for a clinical and/or academic research career and qualifications for the fellowship.

- **Lay Abstract:** (maximum 300 words)
- **Proposal:** Submit a Research Plan, including brief statements of aims, background, contemplated approaches to methodology and any supporting preliminary data. References do not count toward the page limit. The research plan should be written by the applicant

but is expected and encouraged to develop this plan based on discussion with the proposed mentors. The proposal should approximately be 3-pages in length.

A **successful application** should include the following:

- Well-developed hypothesis: The hypothesis is testable and presented in clear language.
- Detailed statistical plan: Statistical methods are well-designed and comprehensive.
- Strong mentorship: There is clear demonstration of mentorship to support the project.
- Feasible primary outcomes: Each aim is achievable, focused, and logical.
- Innovation: Project concept is original, novel, and will advance the applicant’s long-term career goals.
- Well-defined training plan and integration of clinical and research activities, i.e., a clear plan for career development.
- Evidence of an effort to support principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Prepare the necessary documents prior to proceeding to the online application.

**Document Checklist:**

<b>Lay Abstract</b> (300 words)
<b>Proposal</b> (3 pages, excluding references)
<b>Letter of Clinical Commitment</b>
<b>Biosketches</b> (3)
<b>Letters of Reference</b> (2)

*The Western Institute for Neuroscience reserves the right to exclude from competition any submissions that are incomplete, inconsistent, or submitted late.*

**Applicant Criteria**

**General Eligibility:**

WIN is seeking the very best candidates with outstanding potential to contribute to neuroscience research. The fellow on the application must:

- be registered as full-time postdoctoral fellows or clinician scientists in training and be accepted to an accredited program at Western University;
- meet eligibility requirements as set out by Western University ([https://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral\\_services/index.html](https://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral_services/index.html));
- have completed a PhD (within the last three years) or a Clinical Degree to be eligible for a clinical research fellowship position;
- have one clinical and one basic science supervisor who have agreed to share responsibility and be accountable for the proposed work

- at least one of the supervisors must be a WIN faculty member that holds an academic appointment and is eligible to hold a Western Research account. This supervisor will serve as the nominated applicant on the application and will be responsible for administrative aspects of the grant such as correspondence, finances, ethics approvals, etc. if awarded.
- N.B. - Nominated applicants can apply for only one grant in each competition and only hold one grant at any given time. They may be listed as a co-supervisor on other applications; and
- have clear intent to spend approximately 20% of their time in fellowship level clinical activities, and 80% of their time dedicated to the research project(s).

### Project Time Period:

Funding for successful applications will last for a period of one year from the funding start date. Funds must be used within 12 months of the award and any unspent funds will be returned to the WIN Postdoctoral Program at the end of the granting period.

### Evaluation Criteria:

Criteria	Description
Novelty of the idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The proposed work leads to a new high impact research idea.</li> <li>- A clear statement of how the proposed work is different from current research programs / funded projects.</li> <li>- The project deals with a need or gap in health research and/or the health care system that can be addressed by research in neuroscience.</li> </ul>
Scientific/technical merit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design, rationale, methods and analyses are adequately developed, well-integrated, innovative, and relevant to the aims of the research project.</li> <li>- A clear research plan with specific primary / secondary outcomes, sample/power analysis (<i>if applicable</i>).</li> <li>- The timeline and workflow present a feasible plan of action.</li> <li>- Knowledge dissemination and exchange activities are relevant and soundly designed, both within and beyond the academic community, and appropriately engage with relevant research users.</li> <li>- The postdoctoral candidate's scientific productivity throughout their training, including authorship of peer-reviewed publications or other literature, as appropriate for their career stage and experience.</li> <li>- The proposed research project as a whole is aligned with the postdoctoral candidate's skills and abilities. See Referee comments on the applicant's academic strengths, research skills, level of independence, and their perceived creativity and critical thinking skills.</li> </ul>
Potential for high impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The work gathers necessary preliminary data to move ahead with a large-scale application.</li> <li>- The proposed work leads to a policy/white paper – change in clinical guidelines.</li> <li>- The research leads to a new methodological approach to unlock research blocks or rate limiting steps.</li> <li>- The research leads to a new technology that will accelerate research advances or health care or quality of life.</li> </ul>

Potential for leveraged funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The proposed work would make it more likely to be successful in a major funding application, industry contract or donation.</li> </ul>
Team & project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The team or individual members have not previously held a WIN Postdoctoral Fellowship .</li> <li>- The roles of individual team members in the proposed work are clearly defined.</li> <li>- The team has the necessary players to execute a transdisciplinary research approach, i.e. a cohesive participation of skilled researchers in various disciplines to link or create new conceptual and methodological frameworks that integrate and move beyond discipline-specific approaches to address a common problem.</li> <li>- Clearly outlines now partners involved/engaged in the project (e.g. consumer, industry), <i>if applicable</i>.</li> <li>- Co-supervisors' research experience and qualifications, research funding and resources available to support trainees, and training history relative to their career stage.</li> <li>- The level of support, access to research infrastructure (e.g., technology and resources) and leadership available in the training environment.</li> <li>- The support provided and potential for professional development (e.g., appropriate infrastructure, inter-laboratory collaboration, specialized training, participation in conferences, etc.) and mentorship available in the training environment.</li> <li>- The proposed research project and expected training complements the postdoctoral candidate's desired career pathway.</li> </ul>

### Ethics Approvals: Humans Animals & Biohazards:

All proposals involving research ethics: human subjects, animal subjects, or biohazardous materials must be approved by the appropriate Western certification review committee. If awarded, funds will be encumbered until appropriate approvals are confirmed.

### Accounts and Expenses:

Individual awards are up to a maximum of \$30,000 to support expenses related to the postdoctoral fellow's project, which will be supplemented or matched of a comparable value by existing funds (i.e., tri-council awards, foundation funds). In-kind contributions are not eligible for matching funds. Awards will be transferred to a research account in the nominated applicant's (primary supervisor) home Department/School/Faculty.

The funds can be used in one of two ways: (1) To offset a portion of the fellow's existing stipend, which is set by the fellow's Department/School and/or Faculty; (2) Alternatively, if sufficient funds for the stipend already exist through other sources, the award can be directed towards the expenses associated with the research project.

Each award will be set up as an “unrestricted research account” through Western Research expected to be accessible at the beginning of the funding period. Applicants are expected to expend the funds in the manner proposed in the original request within 12 months. applicant’s home Department/School/Faculty.

The host Faculty and/or supervisor(s) will be responsible for ensuring standard salary and benefits, including unused vacation and/or severance as well as any other related costs are covered for the duration of the award.

### Program Requirements:

#### Reporting:

**PROGRESS REPORT** - Within two months of the end of the funding period, the successful postdoctoral fellow will be required to complete a progress report outlining how the award enriched their research, contributed to transforming their research field, and developed their career. A link to the report will be provided by the WIN staff.

**FINAL REPORT** – A final report detailing project accomplishments and outcomes will be requested at the end of the funding period for the applicant(s) to complete. A link to the report will be provided by the WIN staff. Project updates beyond the final report may be requested from time to time for WIN annual reporting.

#### Funding Acknowledgement:

All publications and presentations arising from research funded in whole or in part by a WIN award should include acknowledgment of support from the Western Institute for Neuroscience. *This work/study was/is supported/funded by <name of research award> from the Western Institute for Neuroscience at Western University*”.