



# WESTERN INNOVATION FUND (WIF)

## WESTERN INTERNAL GRANTS COMPETITION

### PROGRAM GUIDELINES

#### 1 OVERVIEW

The Western Innovation Fund (WIF) awards are made from funds provided annually by the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International Relations). 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 WORLDdiscoveries™ 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). They are also expected to bridge the gap between research results and existing proof of principle grants such as the CIHR POP or the NSERC i2i programs. The applicant will have to demonstrate the need in the marketplace, as well as a method to meet that need, i.e. a marketing plan.

Funding of up to \$50,000 is available; awards are at the discretion of the selection 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.

WORLDdiscoveries™ personnel are available to assist with the structuring of the application or for consultation on issues related to intellectual property, marketing intelligence and commercialization strategy. Applications must offer a clear rationale for the proposed work that have defined milestones (tasks and timing of those tasks) and expected outcomes, exhibit the innovation pathway, and contain a budget explaining how the money requested will be spent.

There will be three competitions per year. Each competition has an application deadline – however, to submit an application in a particular competition, you must have met the Letter of Intent (LOI) deadline one month prior, and to do that you must have submitted an ROI on the subject matter at least one month before that. **Email** your completed and

signed **LOI, ROI, and application** to [internalgrants@uwo.ca](mailto:internalgrants@uwo.ca). Original ROI submissions, with signature, are forwarded directly to **WORLDDiscoveries™**.

<b>ROI Deadline to WORLDDiscoveries</b>	<b>LOI Deadline to RD&amp;S</b>	<b>Application Deadline to RD&amp;S (with ROLA)</b>
<i>March 31</i>	<i>April 30</i>	<i>June 1</i>
<i>July 15</i>	<i>August 14</i>	<i>September 15</i>
<i>November 20</i>	<i>December 15</i>	<i>February 1</i>

## 2 ADMINISTRATION

The WIF Competition is administered by Research Development & Services (RD&S), Room 5150, Support Services Building. (T: 519-661-2111 ext. 84500 Email: [internalgrants@uwo.ca](mailto:internalgrants@uwo.ca)).

All submissions must be received by RD&S before 4 pm on the deadline date. If the deadline falls on a weekend or statutory holiday, the deadline will be extended to 4 pm on the next working day following the weekend or holiday. **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

## 3 ADJUDICATION

The Selection Committee is made up of members of the Technology Transfer and Commercialization Advisory Council (TTCAC), which is an advisory committee to the Vice-President (Research and International Relations). The Director of WORLDDiscoveries™ and Technology Transfer is an ex-officio member of each WIF selection committee. The VP (Research and International Relations) also participates in the adjudication meetings. The TTCAC will assess applications according to the program criteria. Selected applications will be subjected to review by business leaders and professionals with expertise in technology transfer and commercialization.

The Principal Investigator (PI) will be invited to make a very short (5 minute) presentation to the Selection Committee; a short question period will follow. The PI can bring a copy of the Presentation Summary Checklist (see Section 13) to distribute to the Committee members. All applications will be treated with confidentiality and all reviewers are subject to a non-disclosure and confidentiality agreement.

## 4 ELIGIBILITY

A PI must hold an academic appointment with a significant research component at The University of Western Ontario 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 The University of Western Ontario. 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 WORLDDiscoveries™

Office to the TTCAC after all matters relating to inter-institutional sharing have been resolved. The Inter-institutional Sharing Agreement will be appended to the application.

### **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 Selection Committee is looking for in terms of “commercialization readiness.”

#### **In the Life Sciences:**

- The intellectual property (IP) should have been disclosed and assigned\* to Western (or affiliate) according to UWOFA Agreement and patenting process underway
- The prior art patent search must confirm freedom to operate
- There must be a significant application and potential, even if in a niche market
- A clear pathway to Industry must be in sight
- A clear assessment of the development roadmap with costs and risk analysis must be completed
- Potential licensees or other alliances or strategies must have been identified but do not need to have been tested
- The proposal must demonstrate how it will bridge to other existing programs i.e., CIHR-POP or NSERC-i2i
- WORLDdiscoveries™ (or equivalent in affiliated research institutes) should have been involved in the development of the proposal from the outset

\* See Section 10.1

#### **In Engineering, Medical devices or Sciences**

- The intellectual property (IP) should have been disclosed and assigned\* to Western (or affiliates) according to UWOFA Agreement and patenting underway, or protecting in cases of copy-righted materials
- A clear vision of the barrier of entry should be provided (software cases can be either patentable or copyrighted depending on jurisdictions)
- If patentable, prior art patent search must confirm freedom to operate
- The need in the market place must be clearly illustrated and quantified, together with a competitive analysis of the business environment
- A clear development path, including the prototyping stage must be proposed
- Potential licensees or other alliances or strategies must be identified
- The strategy must lead rapidly to an NSERC i2i if appropriate
- WORLDdiscoveries™ (or the Business Development Offices in the case of the affiliates) should have been involved in the development of the proposal from the outset.

- To be eligible, an underlying invention or innovative IP must be the underpinning of the project
- Funding for traditional research projects should be applied for under the ADF program and not WIF

\* See Section 10.1

### **In Arts, Humanities and other areas**

- The intellectual property (IP) should have been disclosed and assigned\* to Western (or affiliates) according to UWOFA Agreement and protection process underway (as needed for cases of copy-righted materials)
- A clear vision of the barrier of entry should be provided (software cases can be either patentable or copyrighted depending on jurisdictions)
- If patentable, prior art patent search must confirm freedom to operate
- The need in the marketplace must be clearly illustrated and quantified; a competitive analysis of the business environment will be required
- A clear development and distribution path, including the prototyping stage or direct production for an Art Works, must be proposed
- Potential licensees or other alliances or strategies must be identified for commercialization or reaching the market
- The strategy must lead to the viability of the proposal if it gets funded and possibly next sources of financing if required
- WORLDdiscoveries™ (or the Business Development Offices in the case of the affiliates) should have been involved in the development of the proposal from the outset
- Funding for traditional research projects should not be applied for through WIF. The New Research and Scholarly Initiative (ADF) or the SSHRC Internal Research programs are possible sources of research funding.
- To be eligible, the underlying IP must be fundamental to the project

\* See Section 10.1

## **5 SELECTION CRITERIA**

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

- . Scientific/technical/creative merit;
- . Scientific or creativity basis for the expected commercial application;
- . Novelty and innovation potential of the proposal;
- . Market existence, readiness and accessibility;
- . Clarity and focus of objectives and milestones to reach the market;
- . Technical complexity, technical risk, and feasibility;
- . Appropriateness of work plan, milestones, and deliverables;
- . Commercial potential and impact for Western and its community;
- . Team expertise and project management;
- . The track record of the principal investigator;
- . The expertise of the team in the research area supporting the innovation or creation;
- . Breadth and depth of team expertise in the proposed fields of activity;
- . Adequacy of personnel and material resources allocated for technology transfer activities and marketing.

An application demonstrating technology readiness for a given market will normally receive preference under the WIF program.

## 6 Forms

The Report of Invention (ROI), Letters of Intent (LOI), and application must be completed, signed and emailed to [internalgrants@uwo.ca](mailto:internalgrants@uwo.ca). All forms can be found on the [Western Innovation Fund page](#) of the Research Western website at: [http://www.uwo.ca/research/rds/internal/rds\\_funding\\_internfunding\\_technicalgrants\\_wif.html](http://www.uwo.ca/research/rds/internal/rds_funding_internfunding_technicalgrants_wif.html).

### 6.1 Report of Invention (ROI)

ROI's must be submitted by the deadline date provided in section 1 of the guidelines, which is generally two months prior to the deadline for the full application. The completed and signed ROI must be submitted to WORLDDiscoveries™ both electronically and in hard copy format.

#### 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 the WORLDDiscoveries™ office. Tel: 519-661-4183; Email: [wt@uwo.ca](mailto:wt@uwo.ca).

### 6.2 Letter of Intent (LOI)

LOI's must be submitted by the deadline date provided in section 1 of the guidelines, which is generally one month prior to the deadline for the full application. *No ROLA Proposal required at this stage.*

NOTE: Applicants who were asked by WORLDDiscoveries™ 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 by the application deadline.

The completed and signed LOI should be emailed to [internalgrants@uwo.ca](mailto:internalgrants@uwo.ca).

#### 6.2.1 *LOI Requirement*

LOI's should indicate the general scope of the proposed project and must be submitted in order to submit a full application.

### 6.2 Full Application

***A representative from the WORLDDiscoveries™ office will contact you shortly after the LOI deadline and to assist you on the submission of your full application.***

It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that all conditions are met and that the application is complete, signed and submitted electronically RD&S by the required date. Applications considered difficult to read due to photo-reduction or small typeface may be returned without review. The application must include the applicant's Tri-Council (SSHRC NSERC or CIHR) CV Module (a PDF version should be emailed).

#### 6.2.1 *Application submission*

Email the completed and signed application to [internalgrants@uwo.ca](mailto:internalgrants@uwo.ca). Any additional pages (i.e., letters of support, air/train fare quotes, etc) must be either emailed as separate attachments or inserted at the end of the application.

#### 6.1.3 *Research On-line Administration (ROLA) Proposal*

Applicants must also complete and submit a [ROLA](#) Proposal which must be approved by the Academic Chair and Dean using the electronic submission process. *The signatures of the Chair and Dean are not required on the application as they will have already approved the request for funding via ROLA.*

## 7 ETHICS, ANIMALS, & BIOHAZARDS

All research proposals involving human or animal subjects or biohazardous materials must be approved by the appropriate WESTERN review committee. Approvals should accompany the proposal or be sent to RD&S within 90 days of the granting of the award. Funds will be encumbered and the project may not commence until appropriate approvals are received from the investigator.

## 8 FREQUENCY OF APPLICATION

A faculty member may submit one application per year to the WIF 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 upon written request to RD&S ([internalgrants@uwo.ca](mailto:internalgrants@uwo.ca)).

## 10 REQUIREMENTS

### 10.1 Conditions of Acceptance

Intellectual Property (IP) will be assigned to The University of Western Ontario prior to release of funds and any IP developed during the course of the project will have to be diligently reported to WORLDiscoveries™ (or its equivalent organization in affiliated institutions).

### 10.2 Interim Report

Three (3) months prior to conclusion of the project, one electronic copy of the WIF interim report is to be emailed in Word format to RD&S by email at: [internalgrants@uwo.ca](mailto:internalgrants@uwo.ca). An email reminder will be sent to you one month prior to this due date.

### 10.3 Final Report

Within three (3) months of the termination of the award, awardees must submit one electronic copy of a brief report of 1 or 2 pages (or ROI if new IP was produced) in Word format to [internalgrants@uwo.ca](mailto:internalgrants@uwo.ca) on what was accomplished during the grant project. An email reminder will be sent to you one month prior to this due date. Any new IP resulting from this work will be assigned to Western.

The report templates can be found on the [Western Innovation Fund page](#) on the RD&S website (<http://www.uwo.ca/research/rds.html>). Failure to submit the interim or final reports or to assign any new IP may jeopardize a faculty member's eligibility for future internally funded competitions.

## 11 RESTRICTED/UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

For each award, an account will be set up as an "unrestricted research account." Investigators are expected to expend the funds in the manner proposed in the original request. 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 written request to RD&S.

### 11.1 Ineligible Expenses

- Graduate student support
- General computing equipment/software
- Funds for travel to attend conferences

## 12 BUDGET

### 12.1 Budget Envelope

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

### 12.2 Budget Justification

An adequate budget justification is required in each application. To avoid arbitrary decisions on the appropriate level of funding, detailed explanations of costs must be provided.

### 12.3 Personnel

The University of Western Ontario 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:

[http://www.uwo.ca/humanresources/leadermanager/pay\\_admin/pay\\_admin\\_index.htm](http://www.uwo.ca/humanresources/leadermanager/pay_admin/pay_admin_index.htm)

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 to the project. Workload should be shown to justify the amount of time the person will be employed on the project. The hiring of professional research staff is preferred, however, post-docs may be considered if appropriate rationale is provided.

### 12.4 Equipment

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

### 12.5 Supplies & Services

Whenever appropriate, numbers of units and unit costs should be explained. Quotes from suppliers should be provided for purchased services, e.g., computing or consulting fees.

### 12.6 Teaching Release Time

Teaching release time will only be considered if approved by Chair/Dean, and must be adequately justified within the application.

### 12.7 Funds for Travel

Requests for travel funds to attend conferences will not be accepted.

### 12.8 Funds for Patenting

Funds for Patenting or patent searches are eligible under WIF.

### 13 PRESENTATION SUMMARY CHECKLIST

Included below is a checklist to summarize issues covered in the application. Not all the items listed will fit every application. Check the boxes that apply to ensure you have covered the main issues.

If you are invited to meet with the TTCAC Selection Committee, you may wish to bring a copy with you. You may also wish to bring a summary of main arguments (maximum two pages) to the presentation.

## PRESENTATION SUMMARY CHECKLIST

Contact WORLDdiscoveries™ if you have any questions about this checklist (ext. 84183 or [wtt@worlddiscoveries.ca](mailto:wtt@worlddiscoveries.ca)).

### Summary of issues to be addressed in the WIF presentation To the Selection Committee

		Yes	No	Comments
<b>Market Attractiveness</b>	New product/process or enhancement			
	Need in the market (market pull) / Customer identification			
	Feasibility of market (size, growth, receptivity)			
	Competitive positioning			
	Will it be profitable? Any indications			
	Have you talked to potential customers/users			
<b>Technical Issues</b>	Production feasibility			
	Inherent risks identification			
	IP Protected?			
	Freedom of operation			
<b>Development Steps (Milestones)</b>	Tasks with go/no go			
	Timetable in next 2 years			