

Interdisciplinary Think Tank Award Program

The Rotman Institute of Philosophy invites Rotman faculty members (core and associate) to submit innovative proposals to the Rotman Think Tank Award Program. Up to \$80,000 will be awarded this year. Awards may range in size from \$2,000 up to a maximum of \$20,000, for a funding period of 1 year.

Think Tanks are meant to increase knowledge and solutions related to grand research challenges by exploring current or future thematic research activities targeting the problem, identify experts from different sectors with an interest in the problem, expand interdisciplinary collaborations across thematic research activities, and support the development of strategic or major grant applications to advance knowledge and the uptake solutions.

The main goal of this program is to support researchers in creating an interdisciplinary team of collaborators to pursue grand research challenges aligned with the Institute's strategic priorities. In addition to cash support, successful teams will receive in-kind facilitation support from Rotman Institute staff along with services available through Western Research. Proposals will undergo a formal peer review process facilitated by the Rotman Research Advisory Committee (RAC). The proposal should convince the review panel that the funds requested will help establish an effective interdisciplinary research team dedicated to making advances on grand research challenge with high impact potential.

2024 Competition Dates

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Applications Deadline | March 29, 2024 at 5:00pm |
| Funding Period | May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025 |
| Recruitment Pitch | By May 15, 2024 |
| Lunchtime Talk | By November 1, 2024 |
| Final Report | April 30, 2025 |
| External Funding Application | By April 30, 2026 |

Eligibility & Program Requirements

PI – The Principal Investigator (PI) must be a Rotman faculty member that holds an academic appointment and is eligible to hold a Western Research account. They will be responsible for administrative aspects of the award such as correspondence, finances, ethics approvals, etc. Please visit the website to learn more about becoming a Rotman member [<https://www.rotman.uwo.ca/research/faculty-membership/>]. PIs can apply for only one award in each competition and hold only one award at any given time. They may be listed as a co-applicant on other applications.

Think Tank Team – Teams must include two or more faculty members from distinct disciplines. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include additional Rotman members (core, associate, and trainees) and non-Rotman members (on or off campus experts and relevant stakeholders) to broaden interdisciplinary perspectives and contributions – at the application stage or as part of the proposed work. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization and the involvement of early career investigators (within 10 years of their faculty appointment). New collaborations are welcomed, but not required. All listed applicants must have contributed to the conception/design of the proposed project; assisted in writing the proposal, approved the final submission, and agreed to share responsibility and be accountable for the proposed work. Trainees must obtain permission from their supervisor(s) to participate in the think tank (Note: trainees would normally not be listed as applicants unless they meet the

applicant criteria.) For more information of how to build authentic research partnerships please visit [RECAP - Western Research - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)

Trainee Support – All proposals are required to dedicate at least 50% of the proposed budget to supporting graduate students and/or post-doctoral trainees (e.g., GSA, RA) with a designation of a Rotman Interdisciplinary Research Training Award.

External Funding Application – Proposed work is expected to lead to external funding applications within one year of its end date. Award recipients who fail to fulfill this program requirements may lose eligibility for future funding through the Rotman Institute for a period of five years.

Funding Acknowledgement – All outputs must include acknowledgment of support such as – “This work/study was/is supported/funded by an Interdisciplinary Think Tank Award from the Rotman Institute of Philosophy at Western University”.

Application Process

Proposal must be completed and submitted in the [online portal](#). Proposal sections include:

Section A - Proposal & Team Overview – *completed in the online form* (See Appendix A for a worksheet to help you gather the information needed prior to completing the online form.)

- Project Title – *maximum 75 characters including spaces*
- Brief Lay Overview Statement – *maximum 400 characters including spaces*
- Lay Proposal Summary – *maximum 1500 characters including spaces*
- Alignment to Rotman Research Domains
- Team Details (Name, Faculty, ORCID ID, Career Status)
- Proposed Budget Table

Section B - Project Description – *uploaded in the online form as a PDF*. Formatting requirements: 12-point font, single spaced, with 1-inch margins. **Maximum 2 pages.**

- **Background & Overview:** *Outline the grand research challenge being addressed and the target audience (What is the problem? Who/what is impacted?). Briefly describe the purpose of the proposed work and how it will be accomplished. Include expected outcomes, possible barriers & risk management strategies.*
- **Originality:** *Describe the innovative aspect of the proposed work. How does it differ from other work happening in this area? (What is it? What does it do? How will it work?).*
- **Team Description:** *Outline the interdisciplinary nature of the team, the expertise and role of each team member, and how the project will be managed.*
- **Training Opportunities:** *Describe how graduate students and/or post-doctoral trainees will be provided opportunities to engage in the proposed work.*
- **Strategic Alignment & Potential Impact:** *Statement regarding how the proposed work will contribute to the vision and mission of the Institute. Explain the relevance and potential value of the proposed work (Why is it important? How will the work contribute to advancing knowledge and the uptake solutions related to the grand challenge of interest?)*
- **Leveraging External Support:** *Explain how proposed work and outcomes will enable the team to seek external research funding to continue to advance progress related to the grand challenge.*

Section C - Budget Justification – *uploaded in the online form as a PDF*. Formatting requirements: 12-point font, single spaced, with 1-inch margins. **Maximum 1 page.**

- Provide a description and justification for all major expenditures, including salaries for research staff or trainees, and requested equipment (if any).

Section D - Optional Appendices – uploaded in the online form as a PDF.

- References
- Additional team details such as team member bios or letters of support

***** Incomplete applications will NOT be forwarded to the committee for review. *****

Evaluation Criteria

| CRITERIA | DESCRIPTION |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Novelty & Impact Potential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative description of the relevance and potential reach of the work • Clear statement of objectives and how the proposed work is unique |
| Strategic Alignment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong alignment with Rotman’s strategic priorities |
| Project management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational and leadership structure well defined to support engagement and implementation of the proposed work • Feasible timeline and workflow |
| Research team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed plan for the development of an effective interdisciplinary team • Appropriate team composition to execute the proposed work • Expected roles and contributions are well defined |
| Training Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasible and well-defined approach to engaging graduate students and postdoc trainees in the work |
| Potential for leveraging funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear plan to work toward successful submission for external funding |

Reporting Requirements

To support the institute’s commitment to ensuring the social relevance of our work, and to breaking down barriers that prevent communication between different perspectives, between disciplines, or within society at large, each successful PI or designated team member is required to: 1) take part in the Rotman Lunchtime Talk Series and 2) provide a one-page final report to be included in the Rotman Annual Report. Other reporting requests may be forwarded as opportunities come forward.

Recruitment Pitch – Award winners will be asked to deliver a brief “pitch” at a Rotman event to present their proposed work. The goal will be to raise awareness, look for potential interest by other institute members and experts in joining the team, and promote training opportunities. Award winners are encouraged to provide details about the research problem / the gaps being addressed, and about the team they hope to form to accomplish the project.

Lunchtime Talk – Lunchtime talk events are typically one hour with two to three 15-min presentations that are open to the broad Rotman membership (i.e., investigators, trainees, and partners). Think tank Lunchtime Talk presentations will typically occur within 6 months of receiving the award in order to provide a progress update and get the membership excited about next steps. As in the “pitch” award winners are encouraged to provide details about the research problem / the gaps being addressed, and about the team gathered to accomplish the project. To facilitate interaction with the audience, the presenters may choose to highlight potential risks and mitigation plans or unique disciplines, stakeholders or expertise that the team is seeking to expand collaboration.

Final Report – A one-page final report detailing project accomplishments and outcomes will be requested by Rotman at the end of the funding period. A template will be provided. Project updates beyond the final report may be requested from time to time for Rotman Annual Reporting.

End-of-Grant Lunchtime Talk (Optional) – Award winners may choose to do an end-of-grant presentation to update members on progress and impact of the project, knowledge translation plans, leveraging opportunities, and/or future research directions.

Miscellaneous Considerations

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 – 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. Unspent funds will be returned to the institute at the end of the funding period. However, an extension may be granted at the discretion of the Research Advisory Committee under special circumstances. Eligible expenses: salaries for employees, services, and publication expenses. Ineligible expenses: indirect costs, travel, conference registration, or general computing equipment/software. Equipment (including software), which costs no more than 20% of the total budget and which is essential to carry out the proposed project may be requested. The budget justification must include a brief description of the duties of the personnel requested and the required qualifications, and a brief explanation as to why the position is necessary for the project.

Appendix A - Proposal & Team Overview

The proposal and team overview section must be completed in the [online portal](#).

This worksheet is provided to help you gather information needed to complete the online form. Refer to the program guidelines for details about sections to be uploaded as PDFs in the online form.

Questions can be directed to rotman.institute@uwo.ca.

Project Title (*75 characters including spaces*):

Brief Lay Overview Statement (*maximum 400 characters including spaces*):

Lay Proposal Summary - *In terms that can be understood by a lay person (e.g. plain language used for news stories), please summarize your proposal (maximum 1500 characters including spaces):*

Alignment with the Rotman Research Domain(s)

(mark all that apply)

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> | Philosophy of Neuroscience & Psychology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ethics | <input type="checkbox"/> | Philosophy of Technology and AI |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Foundations of Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> | Public Health Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Fundamental Physics | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

| PI (<i>MUST be a Rotman faculty member eligible to hold a Western Research account</i>) | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------|--|
| Last Name: | | First Name: | |
| Home Faculty: | | ORCID ID: | |
| Institute Member: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Career Status: | <input type="checkbox"/> Investigator <input type="checkbox"/> Early Career Investigator <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____ |

| Team Members* | | | | | |
|---------------|------------|----------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|
| First Name: | Last Name: | Home Faculty (if applicable): | Career Status: | Institute Member: | ORCID ID (if available): |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Investigator <input type="checkbox"/> Early Career Investigator <input type="checkbox"/> Trainee <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Investigator <input type="checkbox"/> Early Career Investigator <input type="checkbox"/> Trainee <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Investigator <input type="checkbox"/> Early Career Investigator <input type="checkbox"/> Trainee <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

(* Add rows as needed. **Do not list trainees here unless they meet all the criteria for applicant status. Add additional rows as needed.)

| Proposed Budget Table | Total Cost |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Salaries | |
| Supplies | |
| Services | |
| Equipment | |
| Publication expenses | |
| Other | |
| TOTAL | |