

This FAQ page is for general information only and does not replace the rules or guidance provided in the program guidelines, application form, or any contractual documents. For the best information, please refer to those documents.

How many awards will be supported?

Each year, the Weston Family Foundation will aim to support the following awards:

- Up to **15 awards for master's level students**. Each award is valued at \$20,000 over one year.
- Up to **10 awards for doctoral students**. Each award is valued at \$40,000 each year for three years.
- Up to **5 awards for postdoctoral fellows**. Each award is valued at \$55,000 each year for two years plus up to \$10,000 per year for travel and conference expenses.

Who can apply?

For master's and doctoral level awards:

Students enrolled full-time in a master's or doctoral program in the natural sciences at a recognized Canadian university, who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada, and whose research aligns with the Foundation's guidelines on northern scholarship are eligible for the program. Certain additional conditions apply. Please refer to the respective program guidelines ([master's](#) and [doctoral](#)) or the [online portal](#) for more details.

For postdoctoral level awards:

Postdoctoral fellows whose research aligns with northern scholarship program guidelines and who have support to begin a fellowship in the natural sciences at an eligible Canadian university or research institute under the supervision of a faculty member or research scientist are eligible for the program. Note that applicants must have completed or be scheduled to complete all requirements for their doctoral degree by June 1, 2027. Certain additional conditions apply. Please refer to the program guidelines ([postdoctoral](#)) or the [online portal](#) for more details.

What will I need to apply?

For master's and doctoral level awards, you will need to submit the following documents:

1. An application form, through the [online portal](#)
2. Referee Reports
 - a) Master's award applicants: two Referee Reports (one from the thesis supervisor and one from an academic reference)
 - b) Doctoral award applicants: three Referee Reports (two from academic references, one from a northern community member/collaborator)
3. Official university transcripts

4. Extended Stay project proposals (optional)

For postdoctoral fellowship awards, you will need to submit the following documents:

1. An application form, through the [online portal](#)
2. A Supervisor Report, two Referee Reports (one from an academic reference, one from a northern community member/collaborator), and a Letter of Support from the university/research institute where you plan to undertake your research
3. Official university transcripts

For more details on each of these documents or items, please refer to the full program guidelines:

- [Master's level awards guidelines](#)
- [Doctoral level guidelines](#)
- [Postdoctoral fellow awards guidelines](#)

How will my application be assessed?

For the **master's level awards**, the Selection Committee assesses applicants based on:

Academic excellence:

- Applicant demonstrates evidence of exceptional academic achievement, a strong trajectory in their field of study, and potential to rank among the top students in the country.

Research promise/proposal:

- Applicant demonstrates evidence of interest in northern ecosystems and biodiversity issues.
- Proposal clearly defines the research goals and methods as well as the rationale for why it's needed.
- Proposal is based on research that is timely, novel, and has the potential to make important advances in the field of study.
- Research is based in the natural sciences with a focus on northern ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Proposal demonstrates some evidence of collaboration or design with local and Indigenous communities.
- Proposal shows how the research will help improve understanding of northern ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Proposal identifies the applicant's role within the research project as well as the significance of their contribution.

Potential impact:

- Proposal outlines the significance and potential impact of the research, not only within the applicant's field of study but also in Canada more broadly, especially as that impact relates to the protection or restoration of biodiversity.
- Applicant demonstrates some potential applications of their work beyond academia.
- Proposal demonstrates evidence of a plan to communicate the results of the research within the scientific community, in northern communities, and at national conferences or meetings.

For the **doctoral level awards**, the Selection Committee assesses applicants based on:

Academic excellence:

- Applicant demonstrates evidence of exceptional academic achievement, a strong trajectory in their field of study, and potential to rank among the top students in the country.

Research promise/proposal:

- Applicant demonstrates evidence of interest in, and experience with, research in Canada's North.
- Proposal clearly defines the research goals and methods as well as the rationale for why it's needed.
- Proposal is based on research that is timely, novel, and has the potential to make important advances in the field of study.
- Research is based in the natural sciences with a focus on northern ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Proposal demonstrates some evidence of collaboration or design with local and Indigenous communities.
- Proposal shows how the research will help improve understanding of northern ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Proposal identifies the applicant's role within the research project as well as the significance of their contribution.

Potential impact

- Proposal outlines the significance and potential impact of the research, not only within the applicant's field of study but also to Canada more broadly, especially as that impact relates to the protection or restoration of biodiversity.
- Applicant demonstrates some potential applications of their work beyond academia.
- Proposal demonstrates evidence of a plan to communicate the results of the research within the scientific community, in northern communities, and at national meetings.

For **postdoctoral level awards**, the Selection Committee assesses applicants based on:

Academic excellence:

- Applicant demonstrates evidence of exceptional academic achievement, a strong trajectory in their field of study, and potential to rank among the top students in the country.

Research promise:

- Applicant demonstrates interest in, and experience with, research in Canada's North.
- Applicant demonstrates an effort to pursue a career as a northern scientist.

Research proposal:

- Proposal clearly defines the research goals and methods as well as the rationale for why it's needed.
- Proposal is based on research that is timely, novel, and has the potential to make important advances in the field of study.
- Research is based in the natural sciences with a focus on northern ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Proposal shows how the research will help improve understanding of northern ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Proposal shows some evidence of collaboration or design with local and Indigenous communities.
- Proposal identifies the applicant's role within the research project as well as the significance of their contribution.

Potential impact:

- Proposal outlines the significance and potential impact of the research, not only within the applicant's field of study but also to Canada more broadly, especially as it pertains to the restoration or conservation of biodiversity.
- Applicant demonstrates the potential impact of their research on local or Indigenous communities.
- Applicant shows some potential applications of their work beyond academia.
- Applicant demonstrates evidence of effort to have their research known within academia and beyond (i.e., evidence of a willingness to present their research results at scientific conferences and meetings as well as a willingness to promote public interest in the importance of northern scientific endeavours).

Can I hold a Weston Family Award concurrently with another award?

This depends on the award.

For master's level awards, recipients can hold other awards concurrently (e.g. NSERC Canada Graduate Scholarship-Master's Program, Ontario Graduate Scholarship, etc.).

For doctoral level awards, recipients cannot hold another equivalent major award (e.g., NSERC CGS-D, Vanier Scholarship, MITACS, etc.).

For postdoctoral level award holders, recipients cannot hold other major fellowships concurrently. In addition, they cannot be employed other than to teach the equivalent of one full course per year at the university where they hold the award.

If I have received a Weston Family Award in the past, can I apply for another Weston Family Award in a different category

Yes. For example, if you were previously awarded a Weston Family Award in Northern Research at the master's level, you may apply for the doctoral or postdoctoral streams. Similarly, if you were previously awarded a Weston Family Award in Northern Research at the doctoral level, you may apply to the postdoctoral stream.