



uOttawa

Faculté de droit  
Faculty of Law



# EDI IN RESEARCH

RESEARCH OFFICE, FACULTY OF LAW



## IS INCLUSIVE RESEARCH ON YOUR MIND?

If, like us, you are interested in creating a more inclusive research environment and helping to remove systemic barriers to the full participation of all individuals in the advancement of knowledge and research, you may be looking for resources on equity, diversity and inclusion in research. In this tool, you will find references to various frameworks, models, tools, and resources that examine these issues and suggest various approaches to support equitable, diverse, and inclusive research.



## WHERE DO WE START?

# DIMENSIONS: EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CANADA

## A FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE US

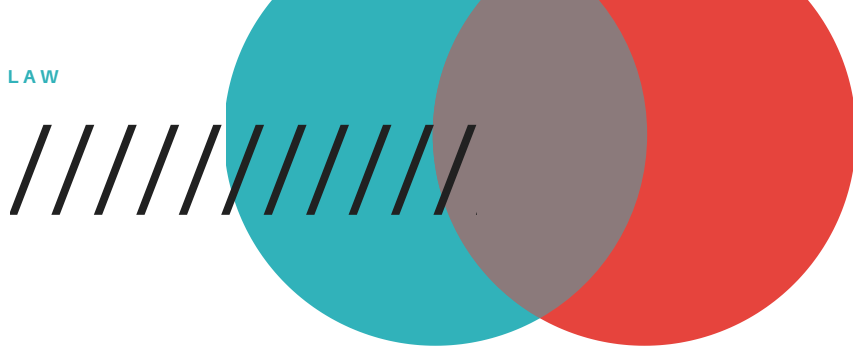
**Dimensions** is a pilot initiative supported by the three federal research granting agencies that seeks to “foster transformational change within the research community at Canadian post-secondary institutions by identifying and eliminating obstacles and inequities.” The University of Ottawa was selected to be part of the two-year long **Dimensions Pilot program**. Along with 16 other post-secondary Canadian institutions, we are engaged in supporting a more equitable and inclusive research, embedding EDI considerations in research design and practices, as well as providing relevant feedback to the Dimensions team to further develop the EDI program. Together, we can work to counter systemic barriers, explicit and unconscious biases, and inequities in the research ecosystem. It starts with understanding EDI, gaps as well as barriers faced by members of many underrepresented and marginalized groups, and how we can increase participation of such groups in our research.

### How to use this resource?

The ***EDI in research*** resource we have developed draws on several frameworks and programs offered by the Tri-Council agencies to bring together definitions of equity, diversity and inclusion, explaining why they are crucial in research and detailing fundamental principles that support the advancement of EDI in research. It also proposes several questions designed to develop best practices for EDI in research; guides us through elements that may prompt new considerations; and offers in-depth examples of ways to advance EDI while building a research team. The resource includes several references and hyperlinks to explore more in depth the content underlined.

### List of acronyms

CIHR – Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
Co-PI – Co-principal investigator  
EDI – Equity, diversity and inclusion  
GBA+ – Gender-based analysis plus  
HQP – Highly qualified personnel  
NSERC – Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council  
PI – Principal investigator  
SSHRC – Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council  
STEM – Science, technology, engineering and mathematics



## THE CHARTER OF THE DIMENSIONS PILOT PROGRAM RECOGNIZES EIGHT FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

1. The post-secondary research community has the greatest potential to thrive when members experience equitable, inclusive and unbiased systems and practices.
2. To advance institutional equity, diversity and inclusion, specific, measurable and sustainable actions are needed to counter systemic barriers, explicit and unconscious biases, and inequities. This includes addressing obstacles faced by, but not limited to, women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities or racialized groups, and members of LGBTQ2+ communities.
3. Institutions require qualitative and quantitative data to measure, monitor, understand and publicly report on challenges and progress made. The analysis of the data should inform a comprehensive, in-depth, intersectional understanding of the contexts, manifestations and experiences that result from inequities, underrepresentation and exclusion among all post-secondary community members.
4. When equity, diversity and inclusion considerations and practices are integral to research participation, to the research itself, and to research training and learning environments, research excellence, innovation and creativity are heightened across all disciplines, fields of study and stages of career development.
5. To contribute to reconciliation, research with, by or impacting Indigenous Peoples must align with the research policies and best practices identified through ongoing engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples and their organizations.
6. Advancing equity, diversity and inclusion is a shared responsibility that requires dedicated resources and strong leadership at all levels. Senior leadership demonstrates commitment through public endorsement, by ensuring the work involved is resourced and distributed fairly, and by embedding changes in institutional governance and accountability structures.
7. Issues of institutional and individual safety, trust, belonging, privacy and power differentials must be recognized and pro-actively addressed; this will be most successful when those impacted are directly engaged in defining the actions.
8. Achieving the overall objective of the Dimensions program—to foster increased research excellence, innovation and creativity within the post-secondary sector across all disciplines through increased equity, diversity and inclusion—involves institutional collaboration, transparency, and the sharing of challenges, successes and promising practices.



# WHAT IS EDI AND WHY IS EDI IMPORTANT IN RESEARCH?

Equity, diversity and inclusion is understanding and acknowledging social inequalities and committing to achieve together a more equitable, diverse and inclusive research enterprise.

By implementing and practicing EDI in every aspect of our research, we can achieve world-class research, and in order to do so, **"we must address systemic barriers that limit the full participation of all talented individuals"** ([Tri-Agency EDI Action Plan](#)).

Although EDI considerations play a key role in assessing research excellence amongst some of the Tri-Agency funding programs, we encourage you to think of an EDI-informed approach to your research program within and beyond Tri-Agency funding applications.

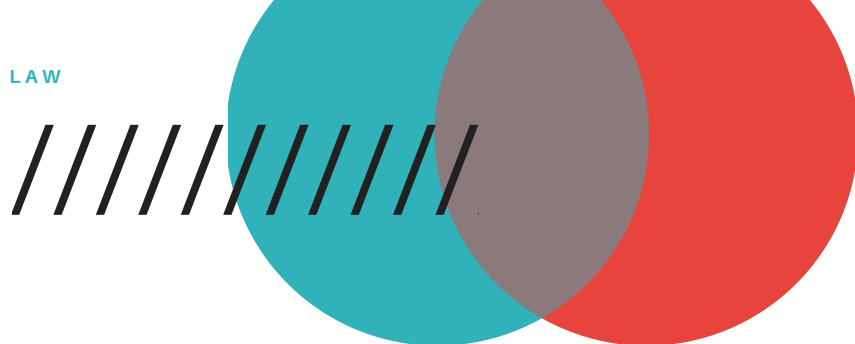
An inclusive research environment can only be achieved through an informed and intentional thinking on how to embed EDI considerations in research design, recruitment and selection, and to identify best practices. This short guide is intended to be used as a way to start a conversation around the principles of EDI in research in order to develop and to promote a research culture that is more inclusive, and to contribute to achieving research excellence.

“

Research shows that teams of diverse researchers are more innovative, have a greater collective intelligence, have more capacity to tackle complex issues and, ultimately, achieve excellence. For Canada to reach its full potential for innovation there needs to be a diversity of perspectives to tackle issues and respond to opportunities effectively that will have real impact. Moreover, to retain excellent research talent in Canada, diverse researchers need to feel meaningfully welcomed, supported, valued and included.

”

**CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS  
PROGRAM**



# HOW DOES SSHRC DEFINE EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?

**E**

## **EQUITY**

is defined as the removal of systemic barriers and biases enabling all individuals to have equal opportunity to access and benefit from the research ecosystem\*. To achieve this, all individuals who participate in the research ecosystem must develop a strong understanding of the systemic barriers faced by individuals from underrepresented groups (e.g., women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, racialized minorities, individuals from the LGBTQ2+ community) and put in place impactful measures to address these barriers.

**D**

## **DIVERSITY**

is defined as differences in race, colour, place of origin, religion, immigrant and newcomer status, ethnic origin, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and age. A diversity of perspectives and lived experiences is fundamental to achieving research and training excellence.

**I**

## **INCLUSION**

is defined as the practice of ensuring that all individuals are valued and respected for their contributions and are equally supported. Ensuring that all team members are integrated and supported is fundamental to achieving research and training excellence.

*\* adapted from the definition provided by the New Frontiers in Research Fund program.*

The definitions above come from the New Frontiers in Research Fund guidelines: [Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research. A guide for applicants to New Frontiers in Research Fund competitions.](#)

### **Other definitions of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion adopted by Tri-Council funding agencies:**

- [Guide to Addressing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Considerations in Partnership Grant Applications](#)
- [NSERC Guide for Applicants: Considering equity, diversity and inclusion](#)



## BEST PRACTICES OF EDI IN RESEARCH

With the goal of incorporating EDI principles in research proposals, you might be asking yourself: "Where do I begin?" One way to answer this question is to start by asking yourself different questions that could help you to identify equity-deserving groups and ways to embed EDI considerations in your research program:

- /// Who is not represented in my field of research?
- /// Are all groups represented across all levels of research?
- /// How do experiences in the team environment differ?
- /// What is the impact of implicit bias in the team environment?

Using quantitative data could also be a good way to identify and emphasize which groups are underrepresented. For example:

- /// If we look at STEM students in undergraduate programs, women represent 44% of the total, while they represent 64% of non-STEM students in undergraduate programs.
- /// Within STEM programs, women represent 16% of students enrolled in Computer and Information Sciences, the lowest rate within STEM programs.

## QUESTION YOURSELF, THINK AND BE INTENTIONAL!

Focus on providing examples of concrete actions that you intend to implement in your research team and training environment. To develop actions, you may consider:

- Specific barriers the action is intended to address (use data or research to support, if possible)
- Relevance to your team or institutional environment
- The approach you will use to implement
- The anticipated impact of the action for your team

You could focus on four key areas to begin thinking of how EDI could be embedded in the research team as well as in the training environment: a) Team composition and management; b) Recruitment, selection and hiring processes; c) Training, development, and mentorship; d) Inclusive team environment. For each key area, you will find below some examples of best practices.



Do you want to learn more about the systemic barriers faced by individuals from underrepresented groups in Canada's research ecosystem?

[LEARN MORE](#)



# RESEARCH TEAM AND TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

## A. TEAM COMPOSITION AND MANAGEMENT

### ASK YOURSELF

What measures and safeguards will I implement to ensure EDI principles are key considerations in the composition and management of my team?

### SOME EXAMPLES

- Familiarize yourself with EDI initiatives, policies and program at uOttawa
- Make a strong commitment to EDI as a PI in your training plan
- Formalize a complaints management process
- Recruit Co-PI(s) who have made contributions to EDI
- Assign a management team member to be responsible for EDI objectives

### EXAMPLE STATEMENT

"The PI is strongly committed to ensuring an inclusive team environment that supports a diverse team of HQP through implementing concrete actions. The management team for the project includes PI/Co-PI(s) with direct experience in EDI, as demonstrated through the PI's participation in leading an anti-racism campus task force leading to 52 recommendations implemented across campus. To ensure the team is prepared to address equity-related concerns among team members, a complaints management process has been established and will be communicated to the team. All complaints will be brought forward to the identified EDI lead, who has received specific complaints management training. Concerns that cannot be addressed internally will be escalated to the Equity Office for additional consultation."

## B. RECRUITMENT PROCESSES

### ASK YOURSELF

What safeguards will I put in place to ensure the recruitment of team members is open and transparent and aligned with best practices (minimizing bias and barriers)?

### SOME EXAMPLES

- Broad distribution of job opportunities
- Develop inclusive job ads
- Consider consulting an EDI expert to review materials
- Develop and consistently use specific selection criteria
- Create a selection committee
- Complete unconscious bias training prior to selection

### EXAMPLE STATEMENT

"The PI/Co-PI(s) completed the Tri-Agency Unconscious Bias Training Module to help identify the researchers' unconscious biases prior to recruitment and selection. As the PI is recruiting from within the department, broad recruitment was not possible. However, the opportunity was communicated openly through email to all incoming graduate students and promoted during an introductory welcome session. Prior to the selection process, the PI developed a series of selection criteria based exclusively on the required skills for the role. As gender was identified as a relevant factor for the project during the GBA+ analysis, experience with gender-based research will be considered an asset during selection. Selection will be determined by a selection committee made up of three management team members to ensure that individual bias of any one team member is mitigated."



# RESEARCH TEAM AND TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

## C. TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORSHIP

### ASK YOURSELF

What approaches will I use to ensure development and training opportunities are equitably distributed in my team?

### SOME EXAMPLES

- Require EDI-related training for all HQP
- Provide information on mentorship programs
- Keep a record of all training opportunities
- Communicate all opportunities broadly and transparently
- Provide financial support for training and development
- Ensure workload of HQP providing mentorship is balanced

### EXAMPLE STATEMENT

"All HQP will be required to complete equity training available through the institution to ensure all understand the importance of an equitable and inclusive research team environment. HQP will be encouraged to explore available mentorship programs, including Women in Computer Science. The PI will provide a monthly email promoting training opportunities. The PI will keep written records of completed training and development to ensure that all HQP are provided with equitable support. All post-docs will receive funding for one international conference, while the graduate students will receive funding for one national conference to ensure that financial limitations do not present a barrier to participation. Senior HQP, including the post-docs and PhD students, will be expected to mentor junior HQP through formalized mentorship roles. All HQP taking on mentorship roles will have their workloads redistributed to ensure that an adequate work-life balance is maintained."

## D. INCLUSIVE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

### ASK YOURSELF

What measures will I put in place to ensure team members from equity-deserving groups feel they belong?

### SOME EXAMPLES

- Provide information on campus resources and supports
- Hold regular meetings to allow HQP to communicate their needs
- Provide alternative meeting formats and dates/times
- Encourage participation in campus equity initiatives to ensure team members understand the importance of an inclusive environment

### EXAMPLE STATEMENT

"Weekly team meetings will be scheduled to ensure HQP are able to provide updates on their workload and discuss any emerging issues, including equity-related concerns. Meetings will be intentionally scheduled during core business hours and avoid days/times that conflict with faith-based practices of team members. Virtual meeting options will be provided for team members with caregiving duties or travel limitations. All team members will be provided with information on available campus resources, including how to access bursaries for parental leave, locations of multi-faith spaces, and inclusive washrooms. Team members will be encouraged by the PI to participate in campus events, including (provide specifics based on availability)."





# TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Another best practice to help address systemic barriers and mitigate bias against underrepresented groups is to take various types of training and read some of the published research. We identified some useful resources and training opportunities to help you enhance/develop EDI considerations in your research program/proposal. With the goal of promoting a more inclusive research environment and training, share these resources with your research team as well.

- /// [Tri-Agency Unconscious Bias Training Module](#) (developed by NSERC and SSHRC)
- /// [Gender-based Analysis Plus \(GBA+\) Training](#) and [Training and tools to apply GBA+](#)
- /// [CIHR training module Research Involving First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#)
- /// [Project Implicit](#), hosted at Harvard University – Explore your implicit bias online. Do your own self-assessment. Registration is free, and the first test takes no more than 15 minutes.
- /// [Leading for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education](#), offered by the University of Michigan – This course is open to professionals interested in learning more about leadership in higher education for a changing demographic or interested in developing their own leadership skills.

## TO ASSESS THE EDI STRATEGIES OF YOUR RESEARCH PROJECT, CONSULT THE EDI SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA



[Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool for Research Proposals](#)



[Outil d'auto-évaluation de l'équité, de la diversité et de l'inclusion des projets de recherche](#)

- /// [EDI Webpage, Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation \(OVPRI\)](#)



Does the work environment of the team provide a safe, supportive and respectful workspace for all team members?

[LEARN MORE](#)



What measures have been or could be put in place to ensure an EDI-informed approach of the selection process of the research team?

[LEARN MORE](#)



Did you know that some team members might be benefiting from informal networking/mentoring opportunities while others are not?

[LEARN MORE](#)



# ADDITIONAL USEFUL RESOURCES

- /// [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#), Office of the President, University of Ottawa
- /// [Tri-Agency EDI Action Plan for 2018-2025](#)
- /// [Creating an Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Research Environment: A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment, Hiring and Retention](#) (Canada Research Chairs Program)
- /// [Equity, diversity and inclusion resources](#) (CIHR)
- /// [Considering equity, diversity and inclusion in your application](#) (NSERC)
- /// [Impacts of integrating sex and gender in research](#) (CIHR)
- /// [GBA+ 101: Introduction, importance and application](#) (CIHR)
- /// [Tools supporting Indigenous research design](#) (SSHRC)
- /// University of Ottawa's [Indigenous Action Plan](#)
- /// [A Guide to Incorporating a Racial and Ethnic Equity Perspective throughout the Research Process](#)
- /// [EDI - Canadian Resources](#), Universities Canada



## GET HELP

TO CONSULT OUR EDI RESOURCES, VISIT THE **EDI IN RESEARCH** WEBPAGE:

/// [COMMON LAW](#)     /// [DROIT CIVIL](#)

FIND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AT UOTTAWA BY VISITING THE OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT RESEARCH AND INNOVATION [EDI IN RESEARCH](#) WEBPAGE

FOR ASSISTANCE WITH EDI IN RESEARCH CONTACT AT UOTTAWA :

**RESEARCH OFFICE, FACULTY OF LAW**  
[Maxime Raymond-Dufour](#), Research Advisor  
[Cintia Quiroga](#), Assistant Dean, Research  
[Natalie Carter](#), Intermediate Administrator

**OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**  
[Nathan Harron](#), Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisor for Research at the University of Ottawa



uOttawa

Faculté de droit  
Faculty of Law

**RESEARCH OFFICE  
FACULTY OF LAW**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to Diego Herrera, former EDI Research Advisor, Office of the Vice-President Research, University of Ottawa, for sharing his resources with us. And to Jenny Flager-George, PhD, Associate Director, Strategic Initiatives, Provost Office, University of Waterloo, for allowing us to reproduce examples from her webinar "Leveraging promising practices in EDI for an inclusive training environment" (CARA, 2021/04/12).