



Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Social Justice Action Plan

Faculty of Medicine Research Office

IDEAS in Research: From Intention to Action

The University of Ottawa (uOttawa) aspires to be one of Canada's foremost research-intensive institutions, to be a leader in discovery and innovation, and an educator of outstanding highly qualified personnel.

In uOttawa's strategic plan, *Transformation 2030*, as well as in the Faculty of Medicine's Strategic Plan 2020-2025, *Leading Innovation for a Healthier World*, we pledge to significantly increase research activities, with an aim to place among the top five Canadian Universities in research intensity. Indeed, the Faculty consistently ranks in the top 3 in Medical/Science grants in Canada (*MacLeans* 2024) and top 5 for publication intensity (Research InfoSource 2023). Similarly, both the University and Faculty strategic plans recognize that equity, diversity, and inclusion strengthen the scientific and medical communities and the quality, social relevance, and impact of research. Recognizing and integrating these values across the research enterprise is therefore a priority of the Research Office.

The Faculty of Medicine Research Office is committed to supporting a research environment that removes disparities experienced by under-represented groups in Canada, particularly women and gender equity-seeking groups, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and racialized individuals as defined in the [Employment Equity Act](#). To this end, we have implemented various measures throughout our processes, policies, and programs to promote the full participation of our diverse community, particularly members of these groups.

In support of this important priority area, the Faculty of Medicine Research Office has committed to the following initiatives to advance and embrace EDI over the next 12 months:

- 1. Support and Training for Research Office Staff:** Research Office staff are involved in the development, review, submission and evaluation of research projects, programs and initiatives from across the Faculty and affiliated research institutes. The Research Office is also involved in the development of the Faculty HR plan and the recruitment and retention of APUO Faculty and Canada Research Chairs. A solid understanding of EDI best practices is critical to ensure that these practices and values are embedded into our policies, processes, and evaluation criteria. EDI training is therefore integrated with our career development activities, including:
 - All Research Office staff undertake yearly unconscious bias training through the Canada Research Chairs [Unconscious Bias Training Module](#) to understand and identify bias in peer review.
 - Research Advisors responsible for the pre-award development of grants, contracts, chairs, awards and prizes will complete regular training and workshops offered by uOttawa, federal and provincial funding agencies as well as Canadian research societies, such as the Canadian Society for Molecular Biology's webinar 'Grant Writing With An EDI Perspective'; and CIHR-IHSPR's workshop on implementing sex and gender-based analysis in research. Staff will also be encouraged and supported to seek out other opportunities for learning throughout the year.

- Research Office staff will take part in workshops and focus groups on IDEAS in research through the uOttawa Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation (OVPRI) and Brain-Heart Interconnectome CFREF as they become available, and in collaboration with Research Office staff from across the University and affiliated institutes.
- The Director, Research Office will participate in the [San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Online Training Program](#) to support the development of the Centre for Indigenous Health Research and Education and linkages to Indigenous research teams across the local and national research community.
- Research Office staff will work together to develop an RO Code of Conduct and Values, reflecting common values, behaviours and a glossary of terms.

2. Support and Training for Faculty Research Teams: IDEAS is now a mandatory component of federal Tri-Council funding and many researchers are unsure how to incorporate EDI into their research funding practices, and subsequently into their proposals. To serve the broader research community in this area, the Research Office is undertaking several additional initiatives to help researchers integrate and adopt IDEAS best practices within their independent research programs, including:

- Research development support to incorporate IDEAS strategies in recruitment and training of highly qualified personnel, sex and gender-based analysis+ in research design, and supporting the social accountability mandate through consideration for vulnerable and underrepresented populations and persons with lived or living experience in research design and knowledge translational/mobilization.
- Development of IDEAS workshops for Faculty members to share concrete tools and evidence-based best practices, and to start meaningful conversations. One workshop has been completed to date, with an additional series of thematic workshops slated for 2024-2025 on topics such as:
 - Creating an inclusive research environment
 - How to use (or not use) race in research
 - Community and Indigenous engagement in research
 - Patient engagement in Research
- Develop a toolbox of resources and references for Faculty members and trainees for IDEAs best practices. This will include online infographics and a 'Tip of the Month' featured on the Research Office website and social media channels, as well as a list of available external training courses or modules for those looking deepen their knowledge.
- Require IDEA training module certification of Faculty members applying to internal Faculty funding programs. This will include attendance to at least one annual IDEAS workshop (as mentioned above).

3. Institutional Initiatives Supporting EDI in Research: Barriers that inhibit IDEAS exist in areas such as policy, practice, culture and organizational climate. Policies and procedures must therefore be developed carefully and evaluated regularly to mitigate implicit and unconscious bias. We will work within our team as well as with units across the Faculty and University to promote and support EDI best practices, including:

- Research Office committee Terms of Reference will be updated to include an IDEAS statement and ensure that committee membership is inclusive and representative of the diversity of the Faculty.
- Members of research search and selection committees mandated to participate in recruitment or grant review and allocation activities will be required to complete unconscious bias training.
- Working with the Faculty Communication and Marketing team to ensure that the broad diversity of the Faculty and affiliated institutes is represented and promoted, including underrepresented groups, investigators across all career stages, Faculty members across all Departments, Research Institutes, and strategic research themes.
- Working with the OVPRI to promote the development of policies and practices that support our IDEAS commitments and values. For example, the RO was integral in the development of a new process for the targeted recruitment of CRC candidates, including the development of an attestation form outlining expectations with respect to confidentiality, unconscious bias training, and commitment to EDI best practices.

4. Monitoring and annual review: In order to ensure appropriate and timely implementation of the RO IDEAS Action Plan, as well as to account for continuous improvement opportunities, the Research Office will establish regular monitoring and review processes:

- An IDEAS Champion will be named in the Research Office to lead the monitoring and review activities annually, as well as be expected to keep their colleagues informed of new evidence based in this field and new best practices that would be appropriate for implementation in the Research Office.
- The IDEAS Champion will be responsible for tracking various training and workshops completed by Research Office staff in order to ensure compliance with the above-mentioned requirements. Certificates of completion will be securely kept in a secure folder.
- The IDEAS Champion will be tasked with tracking and promoting new opportunities for training available to staff, and advocate for support (protected time, financial) to allow staff to participate.
- The IDEAS Champion will consult with Research Office staff managing any search or selection committees in order to ensure appropriate representation in membership as well as track unconscious bias training for all committee members.
- The IDEAS Champion will track attendance at workshop put on by the Research Office as well as distribute feedback surveys to attendees to gather anonymous feedback on content, relevance, speakers, etc.
- Each year, the IDEAS Champion, with the Research Office team, will review and revise the IDEAS Action Plan in accordance with changes in policies, procedures and new evidence based, in our effort to reflect the best practices as they currently stand in the literature and within the context of our institution. As such, this document is to be considered a living document.

[More information on Canadian frameworks supporting EDI in research:](#)

1. University of Ottawa EDI Action Plan for Research: <https://www.uottawa.ca/research-innovation/equity-diversity-inclusion/research-action-plan>
2. Canada Research Chairs EDI Action Plan: https://www.chairs-chaires.gc.ca/programme-programme/equity-equite/action_plan-plan_action-eng.aspx
3. Tri-Agency EDI Action Plan: https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/EDI-EDI/Action-Plan_Plan-dAction_eng.asp#:~:text=The%20Tri%20Agency%20Equity%2C%20Diversity,through out%20the%20three%20granting%20agencies.&text=The%20plan%20comprises%20c lose%20to,equitable%20access%20to%20funding%20opportunities
4. Dimensions Pilot Program: https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/EDI-EDI/Dimensions-Program_Programme-Dimensions_eng.asp
5. Canadian Institute of Health Research Equity Strategy: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50068.html>
6. New Frontiers Research Fund Best Practices in EDI in Research: <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/edi-eng.aspx>