

# McMaster Tip Sheet on Incorporating EDI in Grant Applications

Below, we have compiled a (non-exhaustive) list of approaches **to avoid** and **to consider** as you develop the EDI section of a grant application. This list is meant to serve as a prelude to the program-specific instructions, which are provided in the Appendices that follow.



**Do not** provide generic, boilerplate statements in support of EDI. Additionally, you should not point to institutional or departmental policies as a substitute for taking action yourself.



**Instead**, try to provide a specific and thoughtful response that considers the context of your research area, including your lab, research team, department, institution or field, where appropriate. The institution, your faculty, and your department may have developed policies to promote EDI, but you need to discuss how you have put these policies into practice in relation to your research. Even if you played a role in crafting these policies, you need to focus on the specific actions you are/or have taken regarding implementation.



**Do not** focus on well-meaning, but ultimately insufficient actions, such as hosting your students for multicultural dinners, which do not address the barriers that have hindered EDI.



**Instead**, when describing the actions, you will take to promote EDI, consider how these actions will mitigate or remove the barriers, which have historically prevented equality of opportunity. In your answer, demonstrate how your actions will directly address these barriers. For example, women may be historically underrepresented in your field, which has created the impression that this area of study is not relevant or welcoming to women thereby discouraging future applicants. To address this issue, you can advertise positions in your lab using inclusive, non-gendered, and unbiased language. Additionally, you can advertise these positions in forums that target women, such as the Women in Science and Engineering Initiative.





**Do not** pass the buck. A passive approach where your actions consist of simply posting EDI principles in your lab/research area, appointing a student as an EDI champion and/or send your students to EDI training sessions but do not attend yourself can give the impression that responsibility is being downloaded onto your students. Frequently, such action places additional responsibility on those who have been historically disadvantaged. Furthermore, many students from underrepresented groups do not always disclose EDI, including disability concerns, they may be facing, since they may not be in a position where they feel comfortable or capable of such disclosure.





**Instead**, take active responsibility for EDI in your lab. Although it is incumbent on all team members to uphold EDI principles, as the leader of your team, you have an outsized influence, and therefore responsibility, to create an inclusive workspace. Seek out training for yourself in EDI


and mandate that your students/trainees also take part in EDI training. Facilitate discussion of EDI as a group and create a mechanism so that students can feel safe and supported in sharing EDI concerns with you.


 **Do not** state that you hire students based only on merit. Historically underrepresented groups including first-generation students, minority groups, and students who struggle financially, often have had fewer opportunities for professional/academic development or to cultivate connections. Therefore, this policy, while seemingly neutral, can actually perpetuate inequality.

 **Instead**, promote inclusive hiring practices. For example, in advertising for a position, actively encourage candidates with diverse experiences and only mandate skills, which are absolutely essential for the position.

 **Do not** deny the problem exists or claim that it has already been solved. Even if your Department or Faculty has an equal number of women graduate students and faculty members, consider who occupies the most senior positions and/or whether there is equality in the distribution of resources, grant funding, and awards. Additionally, what about other equity-seeking groups such as Indigenous people, members of racialized minorities, people with disabilities and LGBTQ2+ individuals?

 **Instead**, consider what barriers exist that have prevented these groups from being able to enter academia. Even once they are in academia, what barriers exist which have prevented these equity-seeking groups from having equality of opportunity? For example, do family caregiving responsibilities or financial constraints prevent your students from being able to attend conferences or training opportunities which require travel? What actions will you take to make sure that your students receive equal training and networking opportunities?

 **Do not** list the people from equity-seeking groups that you have trained in the past. How your trainees self-identify is their personal information and so this could be a violation of their privacy. Furthermore, reviewers are instructed to disregard lists, numbers or percentages of women or underrepresented groups that you have trained, so this is essentially wasted space.

 **Instead**, you should discuss the strategy that you employed to promote EDI in your training practices in the past and that you will continue to employ and build upon going forward. Your EDI strategy should focus on the process, not results.

# Appendix I: Additional Resources

## External Resources- Training Modules

- [Canada Research Chairs \(CRC\) Unconscious Bias Training Module](#)
  - A self-paced module that discusses unconscious bias within the peer-review process and provides strategies to mitigate its influence
  - This module is mandatory for those serving on CRC peer review committees and in governance
- [Women and Gender Equality Canada – Gender Based Analysis+ \(GBA+\) course](#)
  - Introductory module that introduces GBA+, an analytical process used to assess the diversity of programs or research initiatives
  - Successfully completing of this module and associated quiz will earn a Certificate of Completion

## External Resources- References

- [Canada Research Chairs \(CRC\)- EDI Requirements and Practices](#)
  - Main hub for CRC action plans, policies, and best practices concerning EDI
- [Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\): Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Research System](#)
  - Main hub for CIHR EDI information
- [Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\): Impacts of Integrating Sex and Gender in Research](#)
  - An overview of how sex and gender-based analyses might improve health outcomes when integrated into different streams of health research
- [Dimensions Pilot Charter](#)
  - The Dimensions program addresses EDI challenges across all fields at post secondary institutions. The charter contains principles and actions recommended to further EDI.
- [Government of Canada: New Directions to Support Indigenous Research and Research Training 2019-2022 Strategic Plan](#)
  - The complete Government of Canada plan for supporting research and research training.
- [New Frontiers in Research Fund \(NFRF\) EDI Guide](#)
  - A document of best practices created for applicants to and reviewers of the New Frontiers in Research Fund Competitions.
- [NSERC Guide for Applicants: Considering Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in your Application](#)
  - A generalized guide for all NSERC applicants containing definitions for EDI related terms, answers to common EDI questions, and resources.
- [Universities in Canada- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(Principles and Action Plan\)](#)
  - Universities in Canada, a membership organization that acts as a unified voice for Canadian institutions, ratifies a EDI action plan annually.
  - Universities in Canada has listed EDI as a strategic priority and highlights reports and resources that discuss strategies, needs, and achievements.

## Other External Resources

- [CIHR – How to integrate sex and gender into research](#)
- [CIHR – Institute of Gender and Health Featured Research](#)
- [CIHR – Sex, Gender and Health Research](#)

- [Department of Women and Gender Equality – What is Gender-Based Analysis Plus?](#)
- [Dimensions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Canada](#)
- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Glossary of Terms – University of Washington – School of Public Health](#)
- [CRC Guidelines and Best Practices for Letter Writers \(Limiting Unconscious Bias\)](#)
- [CRC Guidelines for Assessing the Productivity of Nominees](#)
- [SSHRC's Definition of Indigenous Research](#)
- [SSHRC's Indigenous Research Statement of Principles](#)
- [Tri-Agency Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy](#)
- [Tri-Agency Unconscious bias online training module](#)
- [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)

#### Internal Resources

##### [McMaster University's EDI Strategy](#)

- McMaster's roadmap to identifying and achieving institution-wide EDI priorities and goals

##### Other McMaster Resources

McMaster has many resources available on campus to help you to promote Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in your research and training practices. The [McMaster Equity and Inclusion Office](#) is available for one-on-one consultation and can provide you with guidance, training, and resources to promote EDI in your training program.

Some other resources available at McMaster include:

- Sample applications - contact your ROADS Senior Advisor for an example of an application which does a good job discussing EDI
- [The McMaster Accessibility Hub](#)
- [The McMaster Women in Science and Engineering Initiative](#)
- [Harvey E. Longboat Graduate Scholarship for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Students](#)
- [Indigenous Undergraduate Summer Research Scholars Program](#)

## Appendix II: Further Reading

- Diaz-Garcia, C., Gonzalez-Moreno, A., & Saez-Martinez, F.J. (2013). Gender diversity within R&D teams: Its impact on radicalness of innovation. *Innovation: Management, Policy, & Practice*, 15(2), 149- 160.
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- The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities (PDF, 6.3MB), published in 2017 by Frances Henry, Enakshi Dua, Carl E. James, Audrey Kobayashi, Peter Li, Howard Ramos, and Malinda S. Smith.
- Woolley, A., Malone, T. & Berinato, (2011). What makes a team smarter? More women. *Harvard Business Review*, 89 (6), 32-33.