

BEYOND THE CHECKLIST

Administrators Addressing EDI Challenges in Canadian Research Grant Applications

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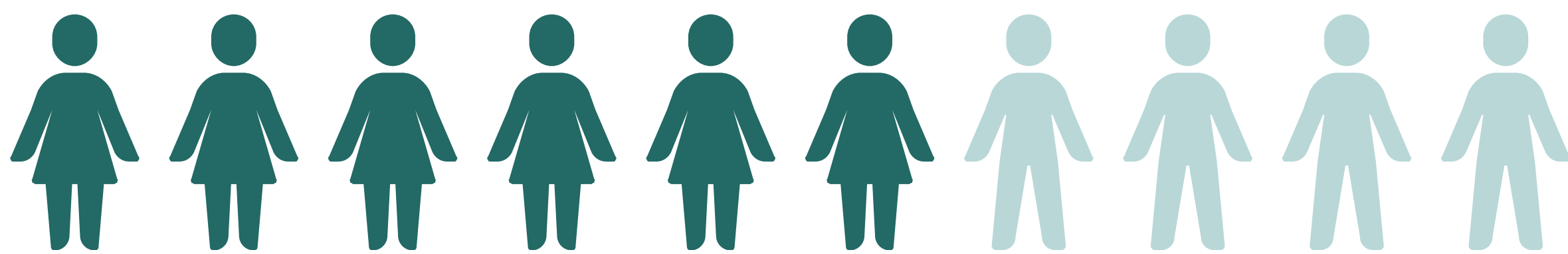
Affiliations

WindEEE, Western University

Introduction

Integrating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) into research grant applications is a growing priority for Canadian funding agencies, but researchers often face barriers such as unclear expectations, limited training, and systemic inequities. Research administrators play a critical role in helping applicants move beyond tokenistic approaches by offering guidance, resources, and institutional support. Without this leadership, proposals may miss opportunities to reflect diverse perspectives and achieve broader societal impact. By actively supporting EDI integration, administrators contribute to a more equitable, innovative, and inclusive research environment.

6 in 10 successful SSHRC awardees identified as women



2 in 10 SSHRC awardees identified as racialized minorities*



*Based on SSHRC's aggregated summary of applications, awards, success rates and committee participation, in relation to the data collected on the self-identification questionnaires.

Tips for Administrators

- Create EDI Resource Hubs, centralized repositories with templates, sample EDI statements, and links to institutional policies.
- Host workshops on inclusive research practices and encourage peer-review.
- Use metrics to track progress and identify gaps. Be open to changing these metrics as needed!

Key Challenges

- 01 Lack of Clear Guideline:** Many researchers struggle with vague or inconsistent expectations from funding agencies about how to meaningfully incorporate EDI.
- 02 Tokenism vs. Meaningful Inclusion:** There's a risk of superficial inclusion, such as adding diverse team members without ensuring a genuine integration into the research process.
- 03 Lack of Training:** Limited awareness or understanding of EDI principles among applicants. Applicants may not fully understand EDI principles or how to apply them in research design, team composition, or knowledge mobilization.
- 04 Inadequate Metrics:** Measuring or quantifying EDI outcomes (e.g., inclusive practices or community engagement) can be complex and often lack standardized metrics.
- 05 Time and Resource Constraints:** Thoughtful EDI integration requires time, consultation, and sometimes additional funding resources that may be limited during the grant writing process.

Identify the Problem

Spot gaps in equity practices.

EDI Resources

Provide tools, templates, training support.

Metrics

Track progress with meaningful data.

Engagement

Foster inclusive, community-driven collaboration.

How We Move Forward

Research Team Composition

Research administrators can guide applicants in forming diverse teams by sharing recruitment resources, connecting them with equity-deserving communities, and encouraging meaningful roles for all members. Hosting EDI training sessions and providing templates for inclusive team statements can help researchers avoid tokenism and build authentic collaborations.

Inclusive Research Design

EDI should be embedded in how research is conceptualized and conducted. Administrators can offer tools and frameworks like GBA+ and intersectionality guides to help researchers embed EDI into their methodologies. Reviewing proposals for inclusive language, participant diversity, and ethical engagement practices ensures that research design reflects a commitment to equity and relevance.

Knowledge Mobilization

Sharing research findings in inclusive and accessible ways is key to EDI. By encouraging researchers to plan for inclusive sharing of information (such as translating findings, using plain language, and engaging community partners) administrators ensure research reaches diverse audiences. Providing examples of accessible outputs and connecting researchers with knowledge mobilization experts can strengthen this aspect of grant proposals.

Key Sources & Acknowledgements

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