

Considering equity, diversity and inclusion in the evaluation of FRQNT grant applications

Context

While Québec must be able to count on all its best science and technology talent, barriers remain to achieving the full participation of certain groups. For example, women continue to be underrepresented, a situation that intensifies as their career advances, especially in decision-making positions¹. Indigenous and racialized individuals also face obstacles to equity and inclusion, as do persons with disabilities and those from sexual and gender minorities².

As part of their 2018-2022 strategic plans, the Fonds de recherche du Québec are committed to strengthening the integration of equity, diversity and inclusion in research. In fact, one of the strategic goals of the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Nature et technologies (FRQNT) is to promote diversity and inclusion within the scientific community.

It is important to dispel the myth that equity and inclusion run counter to excellence. On the contrary, addressing the prejudices and systemic barriers faced by certain individuals simply because of their gender, ethno-cultural origins, sexual orientation or disability provides the research community with access to all its top talent. Moreover, greater diversity is associated with better performance³.

The FRQNT believes that EDI efforts contribute to strengthening the research community and should therefore be recognized when evaluating researchers and research teams and clusters. As of the fall 2020 competitions, the integration of EDI principles will no longer be just an indicator, but will be included as an evaluation criterion for all of the FRQNT's regular grant programs.

Thus, points will now be awarded specifically for the efforts made by applicants to promote equity, diversity and inclusion. We invite you to consult the program rules for all evaluation criteria.

What do we mean by equity, diversity and inclusion?

Equity refers to fair treatment, including the elimination of systemic barriers that disadvantage particular groups. Fair treatment is not necessarily the same for everyone, but takes into account different personal realities, both present and historical, to provide all individuals with access to the same opportunities for the promotion and support of research.

Diversity refers to the presence within the research ecosystem of people from different groups, which promotes the expression of diverse perspectives, approaches and experiences, including those of underrepresented groups. The FRQ value the contribution of this diversity to research.

Inclusion refers to the establishment of practices that allow all members of the research community to be and to feel valued, supported and respected, paying particular attention to underrepresented groups.

What are the FRQNT's expectations regarding the EDI criteria?

The FRQNT does not wish to know the number of women or visible minorities, for example, who are part of a team or who are supervised by the applicant, as this type of counting approach may encourage the tokenism of people from underrepresented groups. In addition, the presence of underrepresented groups can vary widely from one area of research to another, and greater diversity does not necessarily reflect greater inclusion or equity.

Applicants will be evaluated on their **efforts** to create more diversified, inclusive and equitable research environments, whose climate and culture enable everyone to feel supported and respected. These **concrete actions taken or planned** may, for instance, be aimed at reducing the influence of bias in recruitment procedures or the allocation of funding for students; or at making conferences or other scientific events more inclusive (e.g. accessibility, diversity of invited speakers, accommodation for parents of young children).

Other actions may seek to increase diversity within a field, institution or research team, such as science activities for young people from underrepresented groups. Organizing or participating in activities to develop knowledge and skills related to EDI are also examples of good practice. Note that the efforts described in this section should be those of the applicants and not those of their institution (e.g. the existence an institutional EDI policy), unless the applicant has contributed personally to the initiative in question.

These are just a few examples. Applicants are encouraged to reflect on the challenges specific to their environment or their field in order to develop relevant and effective actions. The checklist entitled "*Inclure l'équité, la diversité et l'inclusion dans le recrutement et la formation de personnel hautement qualifié en recherche*", produced by the Chair for Women in Science and Engineering (Québec) and available on the [Chair's website](#) (in French), may be useful to you in this reflection.

For additional information, please visit [FRQNT's web page on equity, diversity and inclusion](#) or contact [Fanny Eugène](#), Strategic Advisor, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Additional resources

- Training and resources developed by Chair for Women in Science and Engineering (Québec): <http://cfsg.espaceweb.usherbrooke.ca/formation-en-equite-diversite-et-inclusion/> (French only)
- Considering Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in your application – NSERC Guide: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/doc/EDI/Guide_for_Applicants_EN.pdf
- Report from Gender Summit 11 North America, co-organized by the FRQ, NSERC and Portia Ltd: https://www.gender-summit.com/portia_web/assets/GS11NA_REPORT_EN.pdf

¹ Devillard, S. et al. (2017). [The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Canada](#), McKinsey Global Institute; Canadian Association of University Teachers (2018). [Underrepresented & Underpaid: Diversity and Equity among Canada's Post-Secondary Education Teachers](#)

² Henry, F. et al. (2017). *The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities*, UBC Press; Freeman, J. (2018). [LGBTQ scientists are still left out](#), *Nature*, 559, 27-28.

³ Hunt V., Layton D. et Prince S. (2015). [Diversity Matters](#), McKinsey & Company; Nielsen, M. W et al. (2017). [Gender diversity leads to better science](#), *PNAS*, 114 (8), 1740-1742.