

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

(Follow this link for [guidelines specific to FRQNT's Strategic Clusters program](#))

### 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 in science and technology, engineering and mathematics, a situation that intensifies as their career advances, especially in decision-making positions<sup>1</sup>. Achieving greater participation of women in STEM careers is thus among the objectives of the *Québec Research and Innovation Strategy* and the *Government Strategy for Gender Equality Toward 2021*. Indigenous and racialized<sup>2</sup> individuals also face obstacles to equity and inclusion, as do persons with disabilities and those from sexual and gender minorities<sup>3</sup>.

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 scientific assessment. In addition, 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, particularly through initiatives aimed at encouraging research environments to introduce measures toward equity, diversity and inclusion.

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 or disability provides the research community with access to all its top talent. Moreover, greater diversity is associated with better performance in both corporate and research environments<sup>4</sup>.

FRQNT believes that efforts toward equity, diversity and inclusion contribute to the strengthening of research and training environments and must therefore be recognized when evaluating the quality of these environments. Given this, FRQNT added, in 2018-2019, an indicator on equity, diversity and inclusion to the evaluation of its strategic clusters (see [guidelines specific to FRQNT's Strategic Clusters program](#)). Starting with the fall 2019 competitions, efforts toward equity, diversity and inclusion will now be part of the indicators used to evaluate applications to all of FRQNT's other regular grant programs (Research support for new academics, Research program for college, Team research project, and Partnership Research Project).

### Description of indicators

Candidates will be evaluated on efforts put into offering an equitable and inclusive training environment and into attracting diverse students and postdoctoral fellows. The goal here is not to know how many women of racialized individuals are trained by the candidates. The proportion of underrepresented groups may vary widely across different research fields, so diversity does not necessarily reflect greater inclusion or equity.

Rather, researchers must describe what they do to promote equity, diversity and inclusion, for instance in their recruitment process and mentoring, or when organising scientific events or attributing financial support. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list: candidates are encouraged to highlight all efforts made in this regard. These efforts should not be limited to increasing diversity, but should also aim to create inclusive, equitable training environments, where climate and culture allow everyone to feel respected.

Please refer to each program's rules for specific indicators. For additional information, please visit [FRQNT's web page on equity, diversity and inclusion](#) or contact [Fanny Eugène](#), FRQ Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor.

### Additional resources

- 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](https://www.gender-summit.com/portia_web/assets/GS11NA_REPORT_EN.pdf)
- Downloadable leaflets on gender diversity from Westcoast Women in Engineering, Science and Technology: <https://www.sfu.ca/wwest/resources/White-Papers.html>
- Considering Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in your application – NSERC Guide: [http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/doc/EDI/Guide\\_for\\_Applicants\\_EN.pdf](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/doc/EDI/Guide_for_Applicants_EN.pdf)

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### Notes and references

<sup>1</sup> 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](#)

<sup>2</sup> The term *racialized* recognizes that the concept of "race" is a social construct. The expression *visible minorities* is often used to refer to racialized minorities, i.e. groups who are the target of racial discrimination.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.