



TABLE OF CONTENTS

You may complete sections individually by selecting them from the table of contents. At the end of each section, you will be redirected to this table of content to select another section to complete or to review. Alternatively, you may complete the full report, without going back to this table of content between each section, by selecting the option “Complete Full Report”.

CRCP Institutional EDI Action Plan - Key Objective(s)



Important Note

(Once you have read the statement below, click the radio button beside it.)

Please note that the information you enter in your report is only saved when clicking on the “Save and Next” button at the bottom of the page. Using the browser navigation buttons or the “Continue Later” button at the bottom of the page will not save the information entered on the page. If after clicking “Save and Next” you see a “Page has errors” message in red, near the top of the page, it means that at least one field is missing information. In such an instance, the empty field will have the words “Answer is incomplete” underneath it, in red.

This report includes mandatory reporting on 1) the CRCP institutional equity, diversity and inclusion action plan (IEDIAP) and 2) the \$50,000 EDI Stipend.

Your institution must submit the report by the deadline date indicated by the program, and must cover the reporting period identified by the program.

Institutions are required to post the most up to date version of their EDI action plan on their [public accountability web pages](#). Ensure to remove all numbers less than 5 prior to posting on your website in cases where your report includes the representation of individuals from underrepresented groups among your chairholders. This is a requirement of the *Privacy Act*.

Each year, institutions must also publicly post a copy of this report to their public accountability web pages within 7 working days after the deadline for submitting the report to TIPS. TIPS will review the report each year; in addition, the annual report(s) will be provided to the external EDI Review Committee, when it is convened every few years, to evaluate the progress made in bolstering EDI at the respective institution and to provide context for future iterations of the EDI action plan.

All sections of the form are mandatory (unless otherwise noted).

Contact information

Please complete the fields below.

Name of Institution:

Athabasca University

Contact Name:

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Does your institution have an EDI Action Plan for the CRCP?

Yes

PART A: EDI Action Plan - Reporting on Key Objectives Analyses, Systemic Barriers, Objectives and Indicators

Date of most recent plan (e.g. latest revision of the public plan):

03/29/2021

Rating given action plan in most recent review process:

Satisfies

Name of vice-president level representative responsible for ensuring the implementation of the plan:

Matthew Prineas

In developing their action plans, institutions were required to conduct: 1) an employment systems review; 2) a comparative review; and 3) an environmental scan (see program requirements [here](#)). These assessments were required in order to identify the specific systemic barriers and/or challenges that are faced by individuals from underrepresented groups (e.g. women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and racialized minorities, LGBTQ2+ individuals) at the respective institution; institutions were then required to develop key S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) objectives and actions to address them.

Indicate what your institution's key EDI objectives are (up to six) as outlined in the most recent version of your action plan (either the one approved by TIPS or the one currently under review by TIPS), as well as the systemic barriers/challenges identified that these objectives must address. Please note that objectives should be S.M.A.R.T. and include a measurement strategy. List the corresponding actions and indicators (as indicated in your institutional EDI action plan) for each objective, and outline: a) what progress has been made during the reporting period; b) what actions were undertaken; c) the data gathered; and d) indicators used to assess the outcomes and impacts of the actions. Please note that indicators can be both quantitative and qualitative and should be specific. Outline next steps and use the contextual information box to provide any additional information (e.g., course correction, obstacles, lessons learned, etc.) for each objective.

Key Objective 1

Brief description of S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) Key Objective 1:

Objective 1: "Ensure an equitable and inclusive research environment for traditionally minoritized groups such as women, Indigenous Peoples, people of colour, people with disabilities (visible and invisible), and LGBTQ2S+ people, recognizing the intersectionality of identities." Advancing toward this objective, AU initiated or met the following sub-actions outlined in the CRC EDI Action Plan: "Deliver foundational EDI training to internal team members across AU's research infrastructure to enhance their ability to support the development and facilitation of EDI-informed research programs and teams. Ensure that the training includes a focus on the specific gaps identified in the environmental scan" (Starting January 2021, ongoing). "Provide unconscious bias training to all individuals involved in the CRC recruitment and hiring process that includes a specific focus on the disproportionately impacted populations as identified in the environmental scan." (March 2021)

Systemic barriers -

Please provide a high-level description of the systemic barriers (e.g., summarize what the barriers are and how they were identified):

The ongoing implementation of AU's CRC EDI Action Plan is based in the environmental scan, employment systems review, and comparative review that informed the current and approved Plan. The systemic barriers and growth opportunities relevant to the present objective include: "Assistance and guidance on how to integrate EDI and Indigenous ways of knowing into CRC research programs and teams is needed." By approaching this barrier through capacity building initiatives for CRC chairholders themselves, staff in CRC research administrative support roles, and faculty involved in the evaluation and nomination of CRCs, the implementation addresses both immediate issues identified in the Plan as well as those related to factors or systems associated with them. It is acknowledged that capacity building in Indigenous knowledge remains outstanding and is, therefore, a priority item in the planning phase for the coming year. In addition to capacity building priorities, it is recognized that the implementation of the CRC EDI Action Plan must also align with the university's overarching journey for inclusive excellence. In this way, the creation of safe spaces and an inclusive culture at AU involved the tandem work of the EDI Committee and a consultant to assess and recommend next steps for advancing toward this through strategic and resource planning. In this respect, this work helped refine the university's understanding of barriers and collaboratively made a recommendation that supports the larger, longer journey of EDI for the organization in coordination with the implementation of the CRC EDI Action Plan.

Corresponding actions undertaken to address the barriers:

The following training and engagement sessions were delivered to grow awareness, expand capacity, and enable action. Delays in commencing some training opportunities were due to awaiting the outcomes of the evaluation of AU's CRC EDI Action Plan (received a "satisfies" grade in March 2021). "Unconscious Bias Training Course," Canadian Equality Consulting training (January 2021 [virtual, "in person"] and ongoing [online, on-demand]). The training was initially delivered for strategic and broad administrative councils at AU. Building on this success, the training was transitioned into an online and on-demand course that could be completed asynchronously by any AU staff and faculty. The course built understanding around EDI principles, language developed around gender identities and LBGTQ2S+ allyship, and examination of personal and organizational biases. "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Research Plans and Processes," guest session with Gwen Hill, Manager, EDI in Research at Royal Roads University (May 20, 2021). The session included foundations of why it is important to include aspects of EDI in research, from the development phase through to dissemination. Participants engaged and learned more about: the case for EDI in research; brief overview of the foundations of EDI; how aspects of diversity impact research at various stages; practical strategies for building diverse research projects and teams; designing inclusive research environments; and creating EDI frameworks that are explicit, achievable, and measurable; how to include EDI in proposal writing and dissemination; and how EDI in research impacts teaching and curriculum. To expand impact and reach of the session, AU invited members of regional ACCRU universities to participate. The recording and resources from the event were made available to other members of AU's research community afterwards through the EDI Intranet site. "CRC Unconscious Bias Training Module," online module provided by CRC (May-June 2021). Co-Chairs of AU's CRC Committee required all members of the CRC Committee to undertake unconscious bias training to support their ongoing work in adjudicating internal proposal and renewal processes as well as providing support to nomination processes. As specific committees were formed for upcoming searches and nominations commencing fall 2021, the training was also required for all members involved in the processes. "EDI, Research and the CRC Process," specialized training hosted by Canadian Equality Consulting (June 3, 2021). The training was delivered to all current CRC Chairholders, the CRC Committee, and all research administration staff at the Research Centre. The session aimed at building upon foundational knowledge in key topics including: (1) foundations in EDI and focus on intersectionality, (2) unconscious bias, and (3) evaluating a CRC application for an open allocation. Resources from the session were received by AU and made available to the broader university research community through AU's EDI Intranet site. "EDI Reviewer Training for members of Academic Research Committee" (fall 2021 and ongoing). To thread EDI into our internal research grant reviewer training and activities, starting in the fall of 2021 all members of the Academic Research Committee who assess and evaluate proposals for the Academic Research Fund are required to complete both unconscious bias training as well as to review the documentation around merit in review processes available through SSHRC. This committee will also play an increasing role in our internal allocation and nomination processes of AU's CRC program. "EDI Training for New Hires in Research Office" (summer 2021, ongoing). As the Research Office grew with three new positions in 2021/2022, onboarding experiences and information provided included mandatory EDI awareness and capacity building training as well as provision of the CRC EDI Action Plan so new members were aware of current state and ongoing initiatives related to EDI. Throughout 2020 and 2021, the EDI Committee met with Canadian Equality Consulting to continue the assessment of gaps and barriers inhibiting inclusion in AU as an organization. One quadrant of consideration was with respect to "Research Excellence," which naturally dovetailed with the current state of the implementation of the CRC EDI Action Plan. This resulted in a report in August 2021, the recommendations of which continue to inform approaches to growing capacity in EDI across the organization. With the support of Canadian Equality Consulting, AU applied for an additional EDI Capacity Building Grant aligned with the aims of the developing report and to address the known resources gap. Unfortunately, the grant application was unsuccessful.

Data gathered and Indicator(s) - can be both qualitative and quantitative:

The data gathered on the above capacity building and training engagements was primarily qualitative and involved invitations for post-event feedback and recommendations related to areas of known or overlooked need for capacity building. Since this objective is ongoing, these insights continue to help shape offerings and program plans. The ongoing work of the EDI Committee involved regular meetings and engagement in terms of both qualitative and quantitative analysis related to issues and opportunities toward a recommendation for establishing a roadmap and resource plan for inclusive excellence at AU. The work was facilitated with the partnered support of Canadian Equality Consulting and included regular working meetings and engagement sessions with a core group of 14 that cut across academic and business units with a focus on representation of members from equity deserving groups. The group focused on data analysis and indicators in five areas: (1) People: Access and Success, (2) Climate and Culture, (3) Research Excellence, (4) Teaching and Learning, (5) Communities and Partnerships. These were mapped onto priorities for current or future state actioning through resource development and planning.

Progress and/or Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

The core of capacity building and raising awareness for EDI in research at AU has been an important impact in this period. The engagements and opportunities were focused on multiple groups (e.g., researchers, chairholders, research support roles, review committees, etc.) which are increasing helping the organization thread EDI across and throughout the research culture and immediate systems that support the CRC program. Undertaking this work in tandem with ongoing and iterative assessment of gaps and opportunities for enhancing inclusive excellence across the organization as a whole has meant that the implementation of the CRC EDI Action Plan is undertaken in a complementary and connected way with larger priorities and aims.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

Resourcing remains a challenge as the scope, scale, and pace of success in the implementation of the CRC EDI Action Plan are largely contingent on Stipend funding and delivery through the Research Office. One key outcome of this season, however, is the recognition that ongoing growth in this area will require a greater investment plan for EDI at the organizational level which will result in both resources, priority alignment, and greater coordination potential for work related to the CRC program.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

To maintain momentum in capacity building, activities and plans for the following year include (1) developing partnerships with other organizations to enhance and extend the resourcing currently available to AU's researchers and staff, (2) partnering internally with Nuksahtowin to align research priorities related to Indigenous knowledge and approaches, and (3) securing resources for ongoing success through the next EDI Stipend call. These items are all underway presently and/or will have outcomes delivered or planned for reporting within the next cycle of the CRC EDI Action Plan reporting cycle (June 30, 2023).

Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this key objective?

Yes

If the answer to the previous question was 'yes', indicate how much of the funding was spent on this key objective and specifically what the funds were spent on.

If the answer to the previous question was 'yes', indicate how much of the funding was spent on this key objective:

13534

If an amount was entered in the previous question, indicate specifically what the funds were spent on.

\$5300, support for EDI Capacity Building Grant application. \$8234, consulting services.

EDI Stipend Impact Rating

Please rate the extent of the impact the EDI Stipend has had on your institution in meeting this key objective:

Moderate impact (the EDI Stipend had moderate impact on achieving progress)

Do you have other key objectives to add?

Yes

Key Objective 2

Brief description of S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) Key Objective 2:

Objective 2: "Enhance the recruitment and retention process for the CRC program to increase representation of traditionally minoritized groups." Advancing toward this objective, AU initiated or met the following sub-actions outlined in the CRC EDI Action Plan: "Provide unconscious bias training to all individuals involved in the CRC recruitment and hiring process that includes a specific focus on the disproportionately impacted populations as identified in the environmental scan." (March 2021) "Finalize targets for increased representation of FDGs for the future of CRC program." (February 2021) "Develop a best-practices guide for recruitment and retention in alignment with AU's emerging strategy for CRC allocations, nominations, and renewals toward the 2029 EDI targets." (February 2021, ongoing)

Systemic barriers -

Please provide a high-level description of the systemic barriers (e.g., summarize what the barriers are and how they were identified):

The objectives and action items above are aimed at increasing the representation of equity deserving groups—particularly the four federally designated groups with an awareness of intersectionality—in AU's CRC program. Barriers to representation and opportunities for growth were identified, and regularly reviewed, through confidential self-identification data provided by the CRC Program. These insights were also complemented by the scan and reviews that informed the CRC EDI Action Plan. Attention was also paid to the planning and processes for filling upcoming nomination to increase inclusion and representation through new allocations or planned vacancies of CRC chairholders completing their terms.

Corresponding actions undertaken to address the barriers:

All members of the CRC Committee and two hiring sub-committees have completed unconscious bias training as made available through the CRC Program. The CRC Committee also participated in a consultant led workshop that extended this training with a particular focus on intersectionality awareness that also incorporated practices and insights informed by GBA+. The hiring committees also participated in a session lead by two Indigenous faculty members on recognizing and reviewing applications that may involve approaches, outcomes, engagements, or impacts of knowledge created in, with, by, or through Indigenous approaches or communities. The session builds upon SSHRC funded ongoing work of these scholars on reviews of Indigenous research for university ethics boards, the activities of which have also involved engagement and capacity building for AU's REB. Targets were finalized using the CRC Program's target setting methodology toward the 2029 requirements. A strategy for jointly prioritizing academic and inclusive excellence in the program was formulated and shared with select academic and administrative bodies for approval and awareness (e.g., Academic Leadership Team; EDI Committee). The strategy for nominations and renewals is in process and will continue to advance toward the 2029 targets and adapt through program growth. A draft CRC Best-Practices Hiring Guide was developed in consultation with Academic Research Committee to guide program delivery. The guide will be reviewed by external EDI consultants for consideration of the alignment of the plan with known needs and growth opportunities for inclusive excellence. The draft will also require review and assessment by additional internal stakeholders at AU prior to its implementation planned for upcoming nominations. AU's internal guide is based upon, and aligns with, the recommendations and requirements of the CRC Program.

Data gathered and Indicator(s) - can be both qualitative and quantitative:

Following the reporting period in question, AU successfully conducted two CRC searches guided by the above-mentioned practices and principles. Both searches resulted in candidates of recommendation that would advance toward AU's 2029 targets and were rooted in the principles of openness, transparency, and equity. It is expected that the foundation laid in the present period will inform future successes as well as reveal opportunities for improvement with respect to barriers or biases in the allocation assignment, search, and nomination of future CRC candidates.

Progress and/or Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

As noted above, the primary results relevant to this objective include the confirmation of a clear pathway toward increasing representation in AU's CRC cadre toward 2029 targets as well as a structural consideration and process evaluation of elements and activities required to ensure success in meeting these targets.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

Since AU has a relatively small cadre of CRC researchers, the primary challenge was establishing a strategy that was minimally disruptive to current chairholders while prioritizing inclusion through program growth or planned open allocations. Ultimately, the exercise was successful in planning a way forward for staged success toward the 2029 targets while continuing to support all current chairholders in their full two terms.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

The development of nomination dossiers for two open chairs will take place in spring/summer 2022. The final review and socialization of the best-practices will take place in 2022/23 and result in a guide for future nominations. This activity will include review by both the internal EDI Committee as well as an external consultant. Ongoing assessment of strategy for AU's growth toward the 2029 targets will be facilitated by reports to/from the CRC Program at regular intervals.

Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this key objective?

No

If the answer to the previous question was 'yes', indicate how much of the funding was spent on this key objective and specifically what the funds were spent on.

Key Objective 3

If the answer to the previous question was 'yes', indicate how much of the funding was spent on this key objective and specifically what the funds were spent on.

Key Objective 4

If the answer to the previous question was 'yes', indicate how much of the funding was spent on this key objective and specifically what the funds were spent on.

Key Objective 5

If the answer to the previous question was 'yes', indicate how much of the funding was spent on this key objective and specifically what the funds were spent on.

Key Objective 6

If the answer to the previous question was 'yes', indicate how much of the funding was spent on this key objective and specifically what the funds were spent on.

Challenges and Opportunities

Other than what has been outlined in the section above, outline any challenges and opportunities or successes regarding the implementation of the EDI action plan, as well as best practices that have been discovered to date. If COVID-19 has had an impact on the implementation of the institution's action plan, please outline how below. How has or will the institution address these challenges and opportunities? (limit: 5100 characters):

There are no additional challenges to report beyond those already outlined above with respect to objectives 1 and 2.

Reporting on EDI Stipend objectives not accounted for in Part A

Instructions:

- Institutions with EDI Action Plans, use this section to report on EDI Stipend objectives that are not accounted for in Section A.
- Institutions without EDI Action Plans, use this section to report on EDI Stipend objectives.

Objectives associated with your institution's EDI Stipend application

Table C1. Provide information on the objectives associated with your institution's EDI Stipend application, including the funding and timelines, for the reporting period.

EDI Stipend Objective 1

Additional Objectives (if applicable)

Table C1. Provide information on the objectives associated with your institution's EDI Stipend application, including the funding and timelines, for the reporting period.

EDI Stipend Objective 2

EDI Stipend Objective 3

EDI Stipend Objective 4

EDI Stipend Objective 5

EDI Stipend Objective 6

Part D: Engagement with individuals from underrepresented groups

Outline how the institution has engaged with underrepresented groups: e.g., racialized minorities, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, women, LGBTQ2+ individuals, during the implementation of the action plan (during the reporting period), including how they have been involved in identifying and implementing any course corrections/adjustments, if applicable. For example, how was feedback gathered on whether the measures being implemented are resulting in a more inclusive research environment for chairholders of underrepresented groups? How has intersectionality been considered in developing and implementing the plan (if applicable)? Have new gaps been identified? How will members of underrepresented groups continue to be engaged? (limit: 10 200 characters)

The journey of EDI at AU is indeed ongoing with the initiatives related to or resourced through the CRC EDI Stipend program being a component of this larger process. There is an increasing recognition that this work requires collective ownership and is the responsibility of all members of our community. It also requires close engagement with members of equity deserving groups with the recognition that it is these colleagues who are often most at risk of being over tasked with this work. With an aim for workload balance, AU's efforts and activities have engaged with members of underrepresented groups in important ways. These include the following: EDI Committee: The membership of this committee is diverse in its representation and its leadership ensured that consultant supports for the work of the group mitigated against overwork. An ad hoc sub committee of this group supports the guidance of the CRC program. The group is also intentionally diverse in representation. They were a key stakeholder in the refinement of the process and preliminary review of an internal allocation exercise for the faculty home and themes of CRCs for upcoming competitions. Their activities also resulted in ongoing and formative feedback for revision and improvement of the process. CRC Search Committees: Recent search committees for open Chair allocations were struck with diverse representation in mind. Prior to inviting individuals to the groups, Deans were approached to make recommendations regarding availability and service loads of academics. Cultural Protocols: Engagements with two Indigenous faculty members who contributed to capacity building in reviews of Indigenous knowledge in CRC applications were rooted in relationship, reciprocity, and a commitment to working well together through an appropriate gesture at the outset of the work. Diverse Presenters and Facilitators: The capacity building program outlined above included contributors and contractors whose areas of expertise in EDI are connected to their lived experience as members of equity deserving groups. In this way, our dialogue partners brought recommendations from both an informed and experiential perspective. Nuksahtowin: AU's centre for Indigenous knowledge continues to be an essential partner across the organization. With respect to Research, the AVPR and EDI Committee met with the centre's Director and Elder in Residence regarding how to thread Indigenous ways of knowing into AU's research culture. These discussions are ongoing and are now informing the redesign of our Strategic Research Plan. Nuksahtowin is also a regular partner in ongoing efforts of decolonizing curriculum within the faculties.

PART E: Efforts to Address Systemic Barriers More Broadly within the Institution

Briefly outline other EDI initiatives underway at the institution (that are broader than those tied to the CRCP) that are expected to address systemic barriers and foster an equitable, diverse and inclusive research environment. For example, are there projects underway that underscore the importance of EDI to research excellence? Is there additional training being offered to the faculty at large? Are there initiatives to improve the campus climate? Please provide hyperlinks where relevant, using the hyperlink boxes provided below (URLs should include https://). Note that collecting this information from institutions is a requirement of the 2019 Addendum to the 2006 Canadian Human Rights Settlement Agreement and provides context for the work the institution is doing in addressing barriers for the CRCP. (limit: 4080 characters)

The ongoing work in EDI through AU's CRC program continues to inform and benefit from the larger inclusive excellence initiatives underway at AU. These include the following items: - The EDI Co-Chairs and Executive Sponsors led the development and recommendation of a preliminary resource plan toward an EDI Office to coordinate and advance this work across the organization. - Academic faculties and the Research Office are increasingly collaborating and coordinating work with Nuksahtowin regarding Indigenization and decolonization throughout the organization and with a particular focus on program offerings, course design, and research priorities. - AU became a signatory of the Scarborough Charter on anti-Black Racism and is engaging internally and externally regarding plans for implementing the charter. - HR is leading an employment systems review to (1) assess and address areas where AU's systems may have barriers to inclusion and (2) work toward a culture that encourages self-identification. Aspects of this work already benefited recent open calls and searches for CRC positions. - Research and Student and Academic Services have explored, resourced, and launched partnerships and resource access for EDI capacity building across the organization through Academic Impressions and the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion.

Before submitting your report, please ensure that your responses are complete. You will not be able to edit the information after it is submitted.

I have reviewed my responses and I am ready to submit my report.

A reminder that institutions are required to post a copy of this report (as submitted) on their public accountability and transparency web pages within 7 working days of the deadline for submitting the report to TIPS.

This information will be sent to the Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat when you click 'Submit'. You will receive a confirmation email with a copy of your completed form in HTML format once it is submitted.

Jointly administered by:

