Canada Research Chairs / Chaires de recherche du Canada

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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.

Each year, institutions must 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. Ensure that you remove all numbers less than 5 from both the plan and the report prior to posting on your website in cases where your report includes the representation of individuals from underrepresented groups among your chairholders, as well as any other identifying information. This is a requirement of the Privacy Act.

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

Contact information

Please complete the fields below.

Name of Institution:

Athabasca University

Contact Name:

Dr. Andrew Perrin

Position Title:

Associate Vice President, Research

Institutional Email:

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587-225-6229

The link for the EDI progress report and EDI Stipend report:

https://www.athabascau.ca/research/about/public-disclosure.html

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 to the action plan in most recent review process:

Approved

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

Dr. Andrew Perrin

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 and gender minorities, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and racialized individuals, 2SLGBTQIA++ 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, 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) the main actions were undertaken (up to six) and how they have progressed; 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. If your institution has not yet prepared or received a formal evaluation of its CRCP EDI action plan (institutions having fewer than five Chairs) then section A is optional.

Key Objective 1

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

Ensure and equitable and inclusive research environment for traditionally minoritized groups such as women, Indigenous Peoples, people of colour, people with disabilities (visible and invisible) and LBGTQ2S+ people, recognizing the intersectionality of identities.

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 employment systems review (ESR) and comparative review that were foundational to AU's CRC EDI Action Plan indicated that AU's research environment could jointly prioritize academic and inclusive excellence. As such, the draft redesigned SRP for the university has a key priority on "fostering an active, ambitious, and inclusive research culture." In this way, the work of the CRC EDI Action Plan has also helped surface that barrier as an item for mitigation in the wider university strategy. With respect to the CRC Action Plan action items associated with this objective, the items below are largely tactical, many of which have had early success but require increased support and coordination institutionally.

Corresponding actions undertaken/to be undertaken to address the barriers:

	If you have no action to report, please type 'N/A' in the answer field.	Progress to date
Corresponding action 1	Develop and execute an EDI communications and awareness building strategy for AU's research communications and an EDI intranet site for community building and engagement.	In progress
Corresponding action 2	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 the training includes a focus on the specific gaps identified in the environmental scan.	In progress
Corresponding action 3	Create and facilitate a regular series of "EDI in Research" webinars for raising awareness around systemic barriers, building researcher networks and support, and resourcing researchers and EDI committees and champions.	In progress
Corresponding action 4	Strengthen current equity concern and complaint processes for CRC chairholders.	In progress
Corresponding action 5	n/a	Not yet started
Corresponding action 6	n/a	Not yet started

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

The data associated with the above actions, when they are fully actioned, would likely be in the form of engagement results with training initiatives, communications campaigns, and the number of equity concerns registered through the mechanism. Note that the action items with this objective had some early implementation, as noted in the previous year's report, but are in a space where stable staffing resources are required for sustainability.

Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

- The redevelopment of AU's intranet has included the expansion of the EDI section associated with the above initial action of the plan. The site includes current information on resources, values, and topics associated with the current state of EDI work at AU as well as links to research specific items including the CRC EDI Action Plan. - The refinement of the current equity concern and complaint process is part of the development of AU's CRC program management guide, which is a primary element associated with the actions of Objective 2.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

As noted below, the lack of an EDI Office to liaise and coordinate this work has been a challenge. Many of the action items indicated above are in their early stages as there is a need for internal resourcing to support the work in a more strategic and sustainable way. To advance in this direction, the AU CRC EDI stipend has been committed to resourcing such a position that took shape and is in recruitment. Such a resource is particularly relevant and necessary for culture and capacity building associated with the above action items.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

- Redevelop "equity concern and complaint" process, mechanism, and communications as part of the AU CRC program management guide under development (see next). Finalize program guide (fall 2024). - Utilization of the EDI stipend to support resourcing of an EDI officer position (projected for 2024).

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.

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:

Enhance the recruitment and retention processes for the CRC program to increase representation of traditionally minoritized groups.

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 foundational work of AU's CRC EDI Action Plan indicated that our program could be enhanced for greater research success and inclusive excellence through the enhancement of the administrative supports and guiding frameworks for seeking, supporting, and hosting CRC positions. This included a review of current processes and their redevelopment to ensure that CRC positions—from recruitment to phase out—had a transparent framework that guided the growth of the program in alignment with AU's equity targets for the CRC program.

Corresponding actions undertaken/to be undertaken to address the barriers:

	If you have no action to report, please type 'N/A' in the answer field.	Progress to date
Corresponding action 1	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.	In progress
Corresponding action 2	Finalize targets for increased representation of FDGs for the future CRC program.	Completed
Corresponding action 3	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.	In progress
Corresponding action 4	Deliver training for current CRC chairholders on EDI foundations and embedding EDI and Indigenous ways of knowing into research projects and teams.	Completed
Corresponding action 5	n/a	Not yet started
Corresponding action 6	n/a	Not yet started

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

Data gathered on the above actions, and outcomes/impacts below, included: the record keeping of completed bias training certificates for members of CRC search committees; success in advancing AU's 2029 CRC program targets through nominations/recruitments; engagements, development, and utilization of the developing program management guidelines as well as the enhancements to the associated financial and administrative systems; and number of registrations and participation in sponsored training events.

Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

- The onboarding process for all those involved in both the internal review of calls for CRC proposals and those serving on search committees for allocations includes an orientation and onboarding package with required unconscious bias in review training as well as key documents for enhancing the openness, transparency, and equity of the CRC search process. - The already finalized CRC targets for AU's 2029 program goals are now effectively guiding AU's allocation planning, nomination submissions, and searches. The university is on track with its commitments for the targets set in the previous year. This activity is in progress and will continue to guide future searches and allocation planning. - The development of a best-practices guide has advanced significantly and is now in a near-final version. The guide has been developed through consultation and connection with AU's governance structure. Key outcomes in this period include refinements realized through testing the process as well as ensuring the guide sparked change in the financial planning and administrative processes associated with hosting a chair position. In this respect, the essential "back end" administrative work to make the guide fully operational was a key outcome of this reporting period. The work is ongoing with the expectation the guide will be finalized and approved in the coming year. - As part of AU's researcher professional development offerings, the Research Office resourced and delivered OCAP training to a cohort of AU academics in response to known needs associated with research design and research data management.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

AU's journey in inclusive excellence in this period included a variety of work in or related to EDI. However, the development of a formal office and/or leadership role to coordinate this work has been a challenge. This is a near-future direction for the university, which will enable greater coordination and support of the items associated with the CRC EDI Action Plan as well as the ability to scale the successes already achieved in the plan into initiatives and aims of the wider university.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

- Finalization and approval of AU's CRC Program Management Guide via AU governance (targeting fall 2024).

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

Brief description of S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) Key Objective 3:

Establish meaningful and culturally safe research environments in which the participating community, group or individual is a partner in decision-making during research.

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 organizational development of the Research Office and growth of AU's CRC cadre provided an opportunity to meaningfully engage to build joint strategies and realize share opportunities with Nukskahtowin's Action Plan. While this is not a barrier per se, it was a gap noted in the collaboration potential in the foundational work of the CRC EDI Action Plan. As such, the corresponding actions below have helped bridge this gap through collaboration.

Corresponding actions undertaken/to be undertaken to address the barriers:

	If you have no action to report, please type 'N/A' in the answer field.	Progress to date
Corresponding action 1	Partner with Nukskahtowin to discuss how (1) to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into the AU research priorities and practices and (2) to create guidelines for future CRC program hiring panels for evaluation purposes.	In progress
Corresponding action 2	Embed EDI throughout the consultation process, design, formation, and implementation of the renewed Strategic Research Plan.	In progress
Corresponding action 3	n/a	Not yet started
Corresponding action 4	n/a	Not yet started
Corresponding action 5	n/a	Not yet started
Corresponding action 6	n/a	Not yet started

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

Success of the above actions are measured by the relationship development between Research and Nukskahtowin that realized results regarding the development and inclusion of priorities for supporting Indigenous research and inclusion in AU's SRP and the creation of CRC program guidelines that would enable success in seeking a nomination for a chair in Indigenous studies.

Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

- Partnering with members of Nukskahtowin to shape and launch a search for an upcoming open CRC allocation in Indigenous health. The collaboration included joint work between Nukskahtowin, the Faculty of Health Disciplines, and Research Office. This item is an example of advancing the shared priorities of AU's research strategy, CRC EDI Action Plan, and Nukskahtowin Action Plan, which includes the aim to explore and advance a chair position in Indigenous knowledge. - CRC recruitment committee members receive an onboarding package and orientation session that includes resources and engagement on reviews of Indigenous ways of knowing, co-created research, community engaged research. Committees are also now struck with an eye to diverse representation, including from Indigenous colleagues. - The Strategic Research Plan Working Group has advanced its work with a diverse group including coordination and representation from Nukskahtowin. The group also includes members of the EDI champion network and the past co-chair of AU's EDI Committee. The broad and regular engagements, which are ongoing, have strived to create many and diverse opportunities to contribute and speak into the process. Key draft deliverables of the plan included a research-specific land acknowledgment, a core area of emerging research expertise in "inclusive futures," as well as goals related to the development of an active, ambitious and inclusive research culture and the development and growth of AU's supports for Indigenous scholars.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

The redevelopment of AU's SRP has been largely a success despite disruptions to the workflow for various external reasons. With the university's overarching strategy development now back online, the SRP work can proceed and build on the engagement and coordination of strategic work, including the joint priorities related to inclusion and Indigenization that are cascading throughout foundational plans. The plans will support the decision making and resource planning for the academic mission of AU in the next five years—as such, ensuring there is consideration and embedment of EDI priorities in all plans at this early stage is critical.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

- Finalization and approval of AU's redesigned SRP in spring 2024, following the launch of the university's overarching strategic plan. Together, these plans will enable additional developments of coordinated unit and faculty-level plans, both strategic and operational.

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 4

Corresponding actions undertaken/to be undertaken to address the barriers:

	Progress to date
Corresponding action 1	Not yet started
Corresponding action 2	Not yet started
Corresponding action 3	Not yet started
Corresponding action 4	Not yet started
Corresponding action 5	Not yet started
Corresponding action 6	Not yet started

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

Corresponding actions undertaken/to be undertaken to address the barriers:

	If you have no action to report, please type 'N/A' in the answer field.	Progress to date
Corresponding action 1		Not yet started
Corresponding action 2		Not yet started
Corresponding action 3		Not yet started
Corresponding action 4		Not yet started
Corresponding action 5		Not yet started
Corresponding action 6		Not yet started

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

Corresponding actions undertaken/to be undertaken to address the barriers:

	If you have no action to report, please type 'N/A' in the answer field.	Progress to date
Corresponding action 1		Not yet started
Corresponding action 2		Not yet started
Corresponding action 3		Not yet started
Corresponding action 4		Not yet started
Corresponding action 5		Not yet started
Corresponding action 6		Not yet started

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.

PART B: Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

Other than what has been outlined in the section above, outline any challenges regarding the implementation of the EDI action plan. 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? (limit: 5100 characters):

The challenges described above are directly relevant to the EDI Stipend. Given the priority need and focus for the recruitment of an EDI officer, the strategic decision to allocate the stipend to this need helped drive the priority forward for the institution. While there has been good responsiveness and recognition of this opportunity in this period, the pathway to recruitment has been longer than anticipated. As such, the stiped was underutilized and an extension was sought. The institution has addressed these challenges by reprioritizing and EDI recruitment in resource planning and in engagements with AU's key governance committees. In this way, while the delay was unanticipated, the pause has provided a space to build additional awareness and to socialize the pathway forward for recruitment. To ensure that the recruitment has a key element of commitment for the CRC program, the AVP Research reviewed and made recommendations on how to effectively integrate priorities of the CRC EDI Action Plan to enable further implementation and redevelopment of this Plan.

Opportunities

Other than what has been outlined in the section above, outline any opportunities or successes regarding the implementation of the EDI action plan, as well as best practices that have been discovered to date. (limit: 5100 characters):

The greatest success has been in the development, enhancement, and refinement in the systems and processes in place, or developed, to support the search and hosting functions of AU's CRC program. The most important best-practice here has been to strive for transparency and clarity in the near-final program management guidelines referenced above. This has helped increase awareness of the CRC program and process as well as enabled the advancement toward the 2029 targets, which also closely align with both established and emerging areas of research excellence in the draft redesigned SRP. The alignment of targets, strategy, and process has also supported the development and awarding of two CRC nominations in areas directly relevant to equity research. A final key best-practice is regular collaboration, inclusion, and reciprocity with Indigenous centres and colleagues to ensure that pathways forward are both inclusive and realize shared priorities for the growth, development, capacity, and supports for AU's Indigenous knowledge creation and university culture.

PART C: 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.
- If you did not receive an EDI stipend during the reporting year, please leave this section blank.

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

Table C2. EDI Stipend Impact Rating
Please rate the extent of the impact the EDI Stipend has had on your institution in meeting this objective as identified in your application, for the reporting period:

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

Provide a high level summary of how the stipend was used:

As noted in the foregoing sections, the EDI stipend for the current reporting period was committed to supporting the resource plan for an EDI officer position, the development and recruitment of which as taken longer than expected. As a result, the reporting in this section is rather limited. The ranking of "moderate impact" here is to signal that previous stipends were foundational in the formation, approval, and early implementation activities of the CRC EDI Action Plan. With the anticipated recruitment of and EDI officer, supported in part through the EDI stipend, the impact would be significant for both the ongoing implementation of the plan as well as its likely redevelopment.

Do you have other objectives to add?

No

PART C: Reporting on EDI Stipend objectives not accounted for in Part A

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 individuals, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, women, 2SLGBTQIA+ 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)

As outlined above, the foundational work associated with this reporting period and the actions of the CRC EDI Action Plan included the following items, now detailed with consideration of engagement with individuals from underrepresented groups. CRC Program Management Guide: The development of this plan has included the review from colleagues in both HR, AU's EDI Committee Chairs, and members of the Research Office who are well-versed in the CRC program, members of the university's EDI Champions Network, many of whom are from underrepresented groups. The interim review process has also included the review by the Academic Research Committee, the membership of which is both diverse in disciplinary expertise as well as included members of equity-deserving groups. The finalization of the plan and last stage of engagement will include review by AU's senior leadership team, which includes representation from Nukskahtowin. Strategic Research Plan Redesign: The membership of this group is intentionally diverse in terms of representation from across the academic faculties and with members from equity-deserving groups. The process for the redevelopment of the plan invested heavily in broad engagement with strategies and supports for facilitation of sessions that would strive for accessibility, inclusion, and engagement. As such, the insights, data, feedback, and engagement mechanisms throughout sought to minimize barriers to inclusion while maximizing opportunities for engagement with the diverse working group. CRC Recruitments: The processes for supporting the internal calls for application, search activities, and nomination developments have fronted the priority of inclusion in both the activities and outcomes of recent CRC allocations and awards. In this respect, diverse representation is a priority for working groups, review committees, and search committees. Particular attention has been paid in recent searches to included current/past CRCs in committees to leverage their expertise and insight as well as to include members with experience and expertise in Indigenous ways of knowing. The latter engagements have been particularly important for building capacity, awareness, and understanding of reviews of research contributions in search processes.

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)

https://www.athabascau.ca/research/about/public-disclosure.html
https://www.athabascau.ca/research/about/equity-diversity-and-inclusion.html
https://www.athabascau.ca/indigenous/index.html
https://www.athabascau.ca/university-secretariat/policy-and-procedures/index.html

There are several initiatives and groups at AU that are active in EDI and Indigenization, many of whom may not have a formal committee or web presence. Those that are formally developed and connected with the development of inclusive excellence through research include: - Research Office: AU's central body for coordinating research strategy, providing research administration, and ensuring research compliance and integrity. The Research Office website details institutional commitments to items such as the Dimensions Charter and the CRC EDI Action Plan as well as includes resource links. The Research Office also maintains the Public Disclosure page, including many items related to reporting and transparency of EDI in research via the CRC program. - Nukskahtowin: AU's Indigenous Knowledge Centre. - AU Policy Library, including relevant policies such as: Conflict of Interest in Research, Employment Equity, Harassment, Violence, and Sexual Violence, Research Integrity, among others. - EDI Committee and Resources (no external hyperlink, intranet only)

Hyperlink 1:

https://www.athabascau.ca/research/about/public-disclosure.html

Hyperlink 2:

https://www.athabascau.ca/research/about/equity-diversity-and-inclusion.html

Hyperlink 3:

https://www.athabascau.ca/indigenous/index.html

Hyperlink 4:

https://www.athabascau.ca/university-secretariat/policy-and-procedures/index.html

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.

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