



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Research Grant Applications – Toolkit

Title

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Research Grant Applications – Toolkit

Overview

This toolkit provides supports for researchers submitting grant applications. The toolkit includes three sections: 1) general E.D.I. objectives to prioritise in grants, 2) prompts to help generate actions for inclusive research design and research practice, and 3) E.D.I. practices in grant writing. For further E.D.I. in research support, please contact the E.D.I. in Research Advisor (sthakur@brocku.ca).

Version

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1. E.D.I. in Grant Writing Objectives

Note: This section provides broad goals to consider while incorporating an E.D.I. lens into grant writing.

- a. Demonstrate understanding of barriers to research practice and research design, paying close attention to barriers experienced by underrepresented groups in creating and participating in research.
- b. Identify opportunities to expand research design, paying close attention to the needs of underrepresented groups in research where possible.
- c. Identify strategies to support well-being, safety, professional development, and relationships-building amongst the research team.
- d. Identify opportunities for team members and knowledge users to direct the project and benefit from its process and outcomes.
- e. Identify strategies to facilitate knowledge users' access to findings and recommendations.

2. Prompts for Inclusive Research Design and Practice

Note: This section introduces general suggestions. For E.D.I. prompts that more closely align with your field of research or project, please request a consultation.

General or Research Design Sections:

- a. Examine your positional power and how you might shape the research process.
 - i. E.g., *How do you define the topic or measures in this study? How might these differ across disciplines or in non-Western contexts?*
 - ii. E.g., *Conduct ongoing self-assessments on [citation practices](#)ⁱ or reflexivity exercises to identify biases and [insider/outsider](#)ⁱⁱ or [in-between](#)ⁱⁱⁱ statuses.*
- b. How will you and your team learn about E.D.I., decolonization, or the experiences of underrepresented groups in research (generally or discipline-specific) on an ongoing basis^{iv}?
 - i. E.g., [The Conversation - Articles on E.D.I.](#)^v; [The Canadian Journal of Higher Education](#) (Brock Log-In required)^{vi}; [UBC Forestry Justice & EDI Podcast](#)^{vii}; [Nuances of Blackness in the Canadian Academy Book](#)^{viii}.

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- ii. *E.g., Join associations, research networks, and conferences where 1) E.D.I. is a focus or 2) research by or for underrepresented groups is shared.*
 - iii. *E.g., Build in time for all members of a research team to learn about research from your field that 1) focuses on E.D.I., or 2) is created by or for underrepresented groups.*
 - iv. *E.g., Build in time for all members of a research team to engage in E.D.I. in research training, including [Building Better Research](#)^{ix}, [KMb workshop](#)^x, [CPI workshops and teaching tools](#)^{xi}, [EDGE by Mitacs](#)^{xii}, or Tri-Agency [bias in peer review](#)^{xiii} and [sex/gender](#)^{xiv} modules.*
 - v. *E.g., Develop culturally sensitive and decolonizing research processes, policies, and methodologies. Participate in [training](#)^{xv} to facilitate this work and refer to [Smudging protocol](#)^{xvi} at Brock University.*
 - vi. *E.g., Participate in training to respond to microaggressions, such as Human Rights & Equity-led [training](#)^{xvii}.*
- c. How can you increase representational and functional diversity in research design by citing from a range of experts, non-academic sources, or fields?
- i. *E.g., Refer to data on the [“current employment equity targets and gaps”](#)^{xviii} at Brock University.*
 - ii. *E.g., Incorporate patient partners, knowledge keepers, Elders etc.*
 - iii. *E.g., Consider how the scope of your research might expand to include multiple communities and contexts (i.e., locally and globally).*
- d. How can you address power imbalances experienced by research participants or communities the research is about?
- i. *E.g., Consider how communities may experience resource extraction or positioning that pathologizes their experiences, and how collaboration and data ownership strategies might mitigate this.*
 - ii. *E.g., Include participants the direction of research design so research goals, definitions, and measures align with their realities.*
 - iii. *E.g., Consider what caregiving, cultural, financial, linguistic, technology, or transportation resources could ease participation.*

Research Practice Sections:

Note: This Includes Team Composition, Recruitment, HQP Training, and Research Environment.

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- a. How can you enhance inclusion, provide clarity, and standardize the hiring process?
 - i. *E.g., Understand and respond to barriers in hiring, such as career leaves and the impact of limited professional networks on reference letters.*
 - ii. *E.g., Establish assessment criteria, grids, and interview schedules before interviews. Provide questions to applicants ahead of interviews.*
 - iii. *E.g., Assess a range of skills such as leadership and mentorship, knowledge translation, or community engagement skills.*
 - iv. *See Brock’s E.D.I. in Research Assessment Toolkit or E.D.I. Considerations in Virtual Interviews Toolkit for further support.*

- b. How can you provide transparency on supports and procedures to deal with conflict and discrimination?
 - i. *E.g., Provide a list of resources and procedures during team onboarding, such as policies on accessibility, campus mental health supports, [caregiving or religious accommodations and resources](#)^{xix}.*
 - ii. *E.g., Designate an E.D.I. Champion to monitor E.D.I. commitments, host guest speakers on E.D.I. or professional development topics, or monitor anonymous feedback from team members.*
 - iii. *E.g., Develop a [complaints process](#)^{xx} and provide institutional policies and resources related to harassment.*

- c. How can you facilitate access and full participation in the research environment?
 - i. *E.g., Rotate roles and provide descriptions of anticipated skills resulting from each role.*
 - ii. *E.g., Virtual team meetings, detailed meeting notes, virtual lab notebooks, and access to virtual lab simulations.*
 - iii. *E.g., Expand [lab procedures](#) to consider a range of mobility and sensory needs.^{xxi}*

- d. What opportunities do you have to formalize the mentorship process?
 - i. *E.g., Outline mentorship roles, expectations, boundaries, and communication styles in a mentorship agreement.*
 - ii. *E.g., Host regular one-to-one meetings to develop a training plan “that provides a diversity of training experiences” and helps prepare for “public, private and not-for-profit” research contexts^{xxii}.*
 - iii. *E.g., Identify the strategies to manage power dynamics in [supervisory relationships](#).^{xxiii}*
 - iv. *E.g., Co-create a code of conduct, lab standards, research philosophy.*

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- v. *E.g., Provide mentorship training and [co-mentor](#)^{xxiv} research teams.*

- e. What opportunities do you have to transfer power over the research process to team members?
 - i. *Identify opportunities for mentorship and sponsorship^{xxv}, where the latter focuses on [connecting individuals to opportunities](#)^{xxvi}*
 - ii. *E.g., [Uncover](#)^{xxvii} and [help question](#)^{xxviii} hidden curricula in higher academia and disciplines.*
 - iii. *E.g., Encourage team members to direct or incorporate diverse research interests or lenses throughout project.*
 - iv. *E.g., Confirm in writing when team members will be primary or co-authors in publications.*

- f. What opportunities for graduate student professional development can you embed into your practice?
 - i. *E.g., Translate research skills into academic, non-academic, or [narrative](#) CVs^{xxix}, developing networking skills, academic and non-academic presentation skills, managing budgets, or providing and responding to peer-review comments.*
 - ii. *E.g., Incorporate E.D.I. related training such as reconciliation, intercultural competency, cultural safety, mediation, or inclusive mentorship^{xxx}.*
 - iii. *E.g., Partner with campus experts to provide group training related to these skills, such as CPI or Research Librarians.*
 - iv. *E.g., Provide funding to attend or speak at E.D.I. conferences.*
 - v. *E.g., Host guest speakers from non-academic research fields to discuss career pathways.*
 - vi. *E.g., Discuss strategies to respond to common research experiences, such as burnout, competition, isolation, perfectionism, or [rejection](#)^{xxxi}.*
 - vii. *E.g., Email research or service opportunities to all team members on a regular basis.*

Knowledge Translation or Mobilization:

- a. Are you aware of barriers to accessing and creating knowledge, research goals, and needs of knowledge users?
 - i. *E.g., Are there groups who are historically or currently excluded from accessing research-generated knowledge?*

- b. What strategies might address a range of cultural, financial, geographic, language, literacy, physical barriers experienced by a range of knowledge users?

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- i. E.g., Allocate research funding for reaching or engaging underrepresented groups and communities.*
 - ii. E.g., Disseminate research-generated knowledge via open access publishing, free in-person workshops, and free online webinars.*
- c. What resources or skills can be provided to team members and knowledge users to increase access to research outputs and impacts?
 - i. E.g., To help reach a wide audience, consider training on accessible design or instruction to create inclusive workshops or resources, or training to help write policy briefs, infographics, or podcasts based on the research.*
 - ii. E.g., Consult [guidelines](#)^{xxxii} on accessible outputs or [campus experts](#)^{xxxiii} on accessibility.*
- d. What opportunities do you have to include knowledge users in the process of knowledge translation?
 - i. E.g., Fund team members, participants, patient partners, community members to lead academic and non-academic presentations.*
 - ii. E.g., Establish clear expectations and opportunities for authorship. Review recommendations to [manage conflict](#)^{xxxiv} and consider [social locations in decision making](#)^{xxxv}.*
 - iii. E.g., Build capacity in communities, co-create culturally relevant recommendations, or host opportunities for feedback.*
 - iv. E.g., Request feedback from a range of reviewers with different positional power, research frameworks, career stages, or geographic locations.*

3. E.D.I. Practices in Grant Writing

- a. Acknowledge the realities of your E.D.I. efforts.
 - i. E.g., Define E.D.I. as it relates to your study, field of research, or knowledge user needs. For example, what are representational and functional diversity challenges and facilitators in X field?*
 - ii. E.g., Avoid performativity^{xxxvi}, overpromising, or feeling compelled to include all E.D.I. considerations. Focus on feasible and relevant actions that transfer power and resources to your team or knowledge users.*
 - iii. E.g., Acknowledge E.D.I. considerations that unfold throughout the course of your research plan (short and long term, where space permits).*

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- b. Avoid denying the existence of issues or barriers, viewing E.D.I. from a singular lens, or applying E.D.I. to one research stage.
 - i. *E.g., Avoid approaching E.D.I. as solely a gender issue. Consider intersectional experiences and identities.*
- c. Avoid broad or vague statements about E.D.I.
 - i. *E.g., “we prioritize equality, and respect and encourage our team members” is well-intentioned but unclear. Instead, how will you respond to challenges or conflict?*
- d. Avoid repeating Brock statements, policies, commitments, or boiler plate language.
 - i. *E.g., Explain how you will engage these in your own research practice or design. For example, how you will support the [Scarborough Charter](#)^{xxxvii} in your research environment?*
- e. Focus on an actionable E.D.I. plan that explains strategies, required resources, and anticipated outcomes.
 - i. *E.g., Include examples and outcomes of previous E.D.I. efforts, where possible.*
 - ii. *E.g., Be specific and focus on 2 to 3 examples per application section, where possible.*
 - iii. *E.g., Create a tracking file of E.D.I. practices to enhance future research projects, and to revisit for future applications.*
- f. Avoid tokenistic approaches to diversity.
 - i. *E.g., Avoid disclosing team members demographic information or identities. This can be a violation of privacy if not written with consent. Furthermore, relying on diversity in numbers may not result inclusion or equity.*
 - ii. *E.g., Instead, explain how you aim to support team members with a range of identities/needs/locations. For example, how might you support the onboarding needs of international team members adjusting to Canadian academic culture?*
- g. Consider the use of inclusive language in your application.
 - i. *E.g., Describe the collective actions of the team, such as “on an annual basis, we do X”^{xxxviii}*
 - ii. *E.g., Review your application for [gendered](#)^{xxxix}, [gender-inclusive](#)^{xl}, and [bias-free](#)^{xli} language.*
 - iii. *E.g., Revise language practices, as the consensus on language use changes over time^{xlii}.*



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