



# **Incorporating Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Research**

## **Guide**

**Dated: December 18, 2023**

Prepared by: Aria Russell, Respectful Engagement Project Manager, Ocean Frontier Institute at Dalhousie University

In collaboration with Maxence St-Onge, EDIA Research Agent, UQAR

Research shows that diversity of perspectives, teams, backgrounds, and experiences is essential to achieving research excellence. Seeking to proactively promote measures to address inequities and lack of diversity can help ensure systemic barriers are removed for underrepresented groups, therefore achieving more equity and accessibility. Furthermore, the incorporation of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) principles in your research can help researchers achieve excellence in the sense that a diversity of researchers with different backgrounds and experiences can mobilize greater collective intelligence.<sup>1</sup>

This guide will help you through your research proposal development process based on three main sections:

**1. Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility considerations at each stage of the research process**

- Provides information on how to apply EDIA principles throughout the research process, including the planning of research at each stage of the research process.

**2. Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility considerations for research teams**

- Provides insight into building and maintaining efficient and diverse teams that will be responsible for completing the research. It addresses the research environment, overall climate and how these aspects can be made more equitable, accessible, and inclusive.

**3. Incorporating GBA+ best practices in research**

- provides guidance on how to incorporate GBA+ practices in your research.

---

<sup>1</sup> Beaudry, Catherine and Vincent Larivière. 2016. "Factors Affecting Researchers' Scientific Impact in Science and Medicine." *Research Policy*. Elsevier, vol. 45(9): 1790-1817. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2016.05.009>.

Brown, Nicole, and Jennifer Leigh. 2020. *Ableism in Academia: Theorising Experiences of Disabilities and Chronic Illnesses in Higher Education*. London: UCL Press.

Díaz-García, Cristina, Angela González-Moreno, and Francisco Jose Sáez-Martínez. 2013. "Gender Diversity within R&D Teams: Its Impact on Radicalness of Innovation." *Innovation (North Sydney)* 15 (2): 149–60. <https://doi.org/10.5172/impp.2013.15.2.149>.

Francoeur, Claude, Réal Labelle, and Bernard Sinclair-Desgagné. 2008. "Gender Diversity in Corporate Governance and Top Management." *Journal of Business Ethics* 81 (1): 83–95. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-007-9482-5>.

Hewlett, S.A. 2016. "How Diversity Can Drive Innovation". *Harvard Business Review*.

Hong, Lu, and Scott E. Page. 2004. "Groups of Diverse Problem Solvers Can Outperform Groups of High-Ability Problem Solvers." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 101 (46): 16385–89. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0403723101>.

## EDIA considerations in research

<b>EDIA considerations at each stage of the research process</b>	<b>EDIA considerations for research teams</b>
<p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How is the research planned and conducted?</li><li>• How does the research incorporate Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing?</li><li>• Who is impacted by the research and are there any considerations of intersectionality?</li></ul>	<p>Themes to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who works on and contributes to the research?</li><li>• Does the team showcase ethnic and gender diversity?</li><li>• Does the team proactively seek to include, recruit, and learn about underrepresented groups including, but not limited to, racialized minorities, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, women, and individuals from 2SLGBTQ+?</li><li>• The overall research environment; is it welcoming of all underrepresented groups?</li></ul>

## **Section 1: Equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility considerations at each stage of the research process**

To achieve world-class research, we must work towards removing systemic barriers that limit the full engagement of all talented individuals. Moreover, we should nurture a culture and environment where incorporating equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) principles into all aspects of research becomes inherent.

You are invited to approach your work with an EDIA perspective, starting from the initial formulation of research questions to the sharing of findings. The objective is to prompt deeper reflection on how your research can benefit from incorporating EDIA considerations, enhancing its overall excellence.

### **Guiding questions for incorporating EDIA considerations in your research.**

#### ***1. Research questions***

- Does your literature review incorporate relevant EDIA elements and considerations?
  - What are the key words used in the literature review? Do the key words provide any information about who may be impacted by the research or who conducts the research?
  - Does the research incorporate intersectionality and diversity considerations?
  - What are the relevant learning and knowledge gaps? Do current and previous studies fail to appropriately address relevant diversity considerations or fail to incorporate intersectionality?
- How will your research topic and the findings apply to the needs or experiences of diverse groups? Who will benefit from the research, findings, and subsequent deliverables? Are there considerations of the impacts of the research, who will be affected by it, positively or negatively?
- Who will be consulted in the groups mentioned in the research and how?
- Have you made assumptions regarding certain underrepresented groups? Are these assumptions based on empirical evidence?

#### ***2. Design of the study***

- Will members from the groups and populations addressed and impacted by the research, and/or the research questions be invited to contribute to the study? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Which diversity factor(s) could be incorporated to strengthen the study? Why have you chosen certain diversity factors and intersections?

- As researchers, what are your positions relative to the context of the research questions? Have you considered your potential and existing biases regarding the privileges you may have, the identity of the populations mentioned in your research, and how the power imbalances could impact the study? How will these factors be mitigated?
- Does the proposed research follow the correct protocols and/or best practices on how the research is conducted with the population and communities impacted? How will the findings and knowledge be accessed and shared (such as in Indigenous communities)?

### ***3. Methodology and data collection***

- How will you gather information for the populations mentioned in the research? How will you protect the privacy of the populations you aim to invite to help inform your study?
- How will you ensure that the research collaborators reflect the diversity and/or intersectionality categories included in the research design?
- If the analysis is based on existing data, is there potential for bias due to the contextual cultural, and/or institutional factors?
- With regard to Indigenous research, have you turned to specialized support on the subject in order to use the good practices and requirements necessary when research is carried out on Indigenous territories or in collaboration with communities?
- How will bias be mitigated and monitored?

### ***4. Analysis and interpretation***

- Where relevant, have you:
  - provided your data, disaggregated by diversity, and/or intersectionality factors?
  - assessed whether diversity factors, and/or intersectionality factors have an impact on the outcomes of your study?
- If diverse populations are involved in the research, will they be invited to participate in the interpretation of the data and the review of research findings before the completion of the proposed research process?
- If the results of your research are not conclusive, will they be reported in a disaggregated format for future studies?

## **5. Dissemination of results**

- What means of dissemination will be most effective in reaching the communities who will use and/or could benefit from the findings?
- How will an inclusive lens be used during dissemination? Will you consider accessibility factors in the formats to be used? Will anyone who was invited to take part in the research receive a summary of the research findings and/or be given the opportunity to present about the work and outcomes in their community?
- Does the dissemination material use an inclusive and gender-neutral language?

## **Section 2: EDIA considerations for research teams**

This section aims to broaden your understanding on how EDIA considerations are relevant to the building of teams, to recruitment and retention, and to the roles of team members in research design, research execution, analysis and interpretation of findings, and the dissemination of results.

“You are invited to consider your research team’s composition through an EDI lens, from the initial building of the team to their roles throughout the stages of the research process. The goal of this section is to encourage critical thinking and greater reflection on how your research and team could be strengthened by taking steps to create an equitable and inclusive environment with diverse team members, including equitable and inclusive participation and decision-making” (NSERC, 2023).

### **Guiding themes for incorporating EDIA considerations for your research team**

#### **1. Building a research team: talent acquisition, recruitment, and retention**

Building a strong and effective research team

- What steps have you taken to learn about the current state of diverse populations in your research disciplines, university, and/or institution?
- What role can you take to mitigate, prevent, and identify potential biases and barriers within your research environment and in your research team?
- Does your institution have educational EDIA opportunities and resources to help you build strong, diverse, and inclusive teams? If not, what steps will you take to strengthen EDIA considerations in your research environment?
- As you build your teams and partnerships, try to consider the populations and communities most impacted by your research. Have you considered building

partnerships with organizations that focus on the populations in your research to help you co-develop the research?

## **2. Recruitment processes**

- Does your institution have existing EDIA guidelines, policies and procedures related to the recruitment of members of underrepresented groups including, but not limited to individuals from 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, women, and racialized minorities?
- How can you create a recruitment process in which bias is mitigated? For example:
  - Will you ask your recruitment team and interview panels to take training on unconscious bias?
  - Will you seek to foster an environment where decision-making is done by more than one person to ensure an open and transparent process where potential unconscious biases and conflicts of interest are mitigated?
  - Will the decision-makers involved in recruitment reflect the diversity of candidates and researchers?

## **3. Roles and responsibilities within a research team**

Research design

- Consider how biases and prejudices rooted in colonialism, oppression, discrimination, and power differentials could impact the participation of your research team members. How will these biases be mitigated to ensure equitable engagement and participation of team members?
- How will you ensure that all members are involved in the formulation of objectives of the study and contribute to the research team?

## Section 3: Incorporating GBA+ best practices in research

### What is GBA Plus

“A process for analyzing how various intersecting identity factors impact the effectiveness of government programs and initiatives. It involves analyzing disaggregated data and research, and considering social, economic, and cultural conditions. Using GBA Plus involves considering gender and diversity-sensitive approaches to your research. GBA Plus ensures the inclusion of women, men and gender-diverse people in disaggregated data and research.” (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2021)

### GBA+ Best practices

- Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data is encouraged in research. Collection of data must be responsive to all communities mentioned in your research, where possible. Researchers should be open to gathering information through means other than written submissions, such as oral communications (e.g., interviews).
- Outcomes and measurement methods should incorporate community and Indigenous knowledge. For instance, how are outcomes defined in each researched community?
- Analysis should move beyond the descriptive (e.g., percentage of Indigenous individuals in a STEM field) to be intersectional by asking critical questions about social roles, relationships, power dynamics, historical context and how these factors contribute to disadvantage or privilege in certain communities.
- In cases where data is missing or limited, use the best available evidence. A good practice is to invite community members to engage directly in data collection and in documenting community issues.

**Good to remember:** When inviting community members to participate in data collection, ensure you ask them about their preferred ways to contribute to your research rather than imposing any method on them. Make sure to compensate them for their time and contributions and share with them your research outcomes.

Should you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact Aria Russell (she/her) and Maxence St-Onge (he/him) by email:

- 1- [Aria.Russell@dal.ca](mailto:Aria.Russell@dal.ca)
- 2- [Maxence St-onge@uqar.ca](mailto:Maxence_St-onge@uqar.ca)

In their roles as TCA EDIA specialists, Aria and Maxence are available to assist you in formulating EDIA strategies, plans, and tactics. They can also support you in measuring the indicators of success of your initiatives, ensuring that your research effectively addresses EDIA concerns.



## References

Government of Canada (n.d.). *Gender-based analysis plus research guide*. <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus/resources/research-guide.html>

Government of Canada. (2021). *Guidance: gender-based analysis plus in impact assessment*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/services/policy-guidance/practitioners-guide-impact-assessment-act/gender-based-analysis.html#toc005>

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. (2023). *NSERC guide on integrating equity, diversity and inclusion considerations in research*. [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Policies-Politiques/EDI\\_guidance-Conseils\\_EDI\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Policies-Politiques/EDI_guidance-Conseils_EDI_eng.asp)

Women and Gender Equality Canada (2021, March 31). *Gender-based Analysis Plus research guide*. <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus/resources/research-guide.html>