

## RNA Canada ARN – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

### 1. Purpose

RNA Canada ARN recognizes that equity, diversity, and inclusion strengthen the RNA Canada ARN research community, its research output, innovation, and impact as well as the opportunities for all trainees and researchers. Accordingly, RNA Canada ARN is committed to creating equitable, diverse, and inclusive environments where all members of RNA Canada ARN, members of the broader Canadian RNA research community, and its stakeholders and partners feel welcome.

### 2. Principles

- a. RNA Canada ARN recognizes that unconscious and systemic barriers exist for members of underrepresented or disadvantaged groups including, but not limited to, women, Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis), persons with disabilities, members of visible minority/racialized groups and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual) communities. Moreover, RNA Canada ARN acknowledges that people with intersectional backgrounds encounter particular barriers.
- b. RNA Canada ARN aims to be a safe and welcoming place for all people where all members and partners are respected.
- c. Every member has the right to engage free of discrimination and harassment.
- d. RNA Canada ARN does not tolerate behaviour that violates principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and is committed to prevent such behaviours.
- e. RNA Canada ARN is committed to educating and informing all members on issues associated with equity, diversity, inclusion, antiracism, indigenization, reconciliation, discrimination, harassment, and other related topics.

### 3. Definitions

- a. *Equity* is defined as the removal of systemic barriers (e.g. unconscious bias, discrimination, racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, etc.), enabling all individuals to have unbiased opportunity to access and benefit from RNA Canada ARN membership, programming, and events.
- b. *Diversity* is about the variety of unique dimensions, identities, qualities, and characteristics individuals possess along with other identity factors.
- c. *Inclusion* is defined as the practice of ensuring that all individuals are valued and respected for their contributions and are supported equitably in a culturally safe environment.

- d. *Systemic barriers* are defined as attitudes, policies, practices, or systems that result in individuals from certain population groups receiving unequal access to or being excluded from participation in employment, services, or programs.
- e. *Intersectionality* is a framework for understanding how a person's different social and political identities can combine and overlap to create different and increased levels of discrimination or privilege.
- f. *Performativity* is the practice of doing equity work for compliance or to make an organization or person "look good" and increase its/their social capital versus making genuine efforts to create substantive change.
- g. *Tokenism*, a type of performativity, is when inclusion or diversity are pursued in a perfunctory or symbolic fashion. An example of tokenism is the recruitment of individuals from underrepresented groups to create an appearance of diversity without also taking steps to address underlying inequities.
- h. *Accessibility* is the practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible.

#### 4. Responsibilities

- a. Members (Class A and Class B members as defined by the RNA Canada ARN By-Law)
  - i. Are expected to actively contribute to creating and maintaining inclusive and respectful interactions with all individuals in the RNA research community.
  - ii. Are expected to take action and to report when they believe others are disrespected.
  - iii. Are expected to make a stand and to lead by example. For example, members should make their participation in events conditional on diversity being addressed.
  - iv. Are responsible to learn about and to understand barriers towards equity, diversity and inclusion and best practices to foster inclusive environments within RNA Canada ARN and in their workspaces.
- b. Committees
  - i. RNA Canada ARN will actively monitor the membership among the Board of Directors, standing and ad hoc committees to ensure that committees have a diverse membership reflecting the RNA community in Canada. Thereby, different perspectives and experiences will be represented, promoting objectivity and balanced decision making.
  - ii. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) committee is responsible for reviewing and updating the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedures. In addition, the EDI committee will organize annual learning opportunities to advance understanding of and action towards equity, diversity, and inclusion.
  - iii. The EDI committee in consultation with the Membership and Analytics Committee will decide which data on equity, diversity, and inclusion

should be collected. The Membership and Analytics Committee is responsible for regularly collecting data on equity, diversity, and inclusion within RNA Canada ARN. Subsequently, the EDI committee is responsible for analyzing data to guide decision making that is promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion. RNA Canada ARN will protect the data of individual members. The EDI committee, the Membership and Analytics Committee, and the Board of Directors will share an aggregated overview of the collected data with the RNA Canada ARN membership.

- iv. The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee are responsible for providing leadership and oversight to ensure that principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion outlined in the Policy as well as current data on equity, diversity, and inclusion within RNA Canada ARN are considered and implemented in all activities of RNA Canada ARN.
- v. All standing and ad hoc committees including meeting and conference organizers are responsible for adhering to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion outlined in this policy.
- c. Events (workshops, conferences, in person or virtual,)
  - i. At all events associated with or organized by RNA Canada ARN, the organizers will acknowledge the traditional ownership of the land where events take place. Organizers will engage with local Indigenous communities to open major events while actively acknowledging and recognizing Indigenous contributions.
  - ii. Organizing committees, selection panels (e.g. for awards), as well as lists of invited and selected speakers will have a diverse membership with appropriate representation.
  - iii. All events will be organized according to principles of inclusiveness and accessibility considering barriers faced by different groups (caregivers, persons with disabilities, etc.).
- d. External communication
  - i. RNA Canada ARN will use inclusive language and images in all communication. Equity, diversity, and inclusion will be actively considered and featured in all forms of communication (reports, website, presentations, etc.).

## 5. Compliance

- a. All members of RNA Canada ARN are expected to understand equity, diversity and inclusion principles and to implement these throughout all interactions and activities of RNA Canada. Accordingly, all members are expected to report inappropriate behaviour that seems to be disrespectful and/or in violation of the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusions. Formal complaints are to be directed to the Chair or any member of the EDI committee or alternatively to any member of the Executive Committee.

- b. As possible, RNA Canada ARN will mediate improved understanding of best practices of equity, diversity, and inclusion and will actively promote dismantling of systematic barriers including unconscious biases.
  - c. The Executive Committee of RNA Canada ARN reserves the right to inform the host institutions about complaints.
  - d. According to the RNA Canada ARN By-Laws, the Board of Directors has the right to suspend or expel any member including directors carrying out conduct which may be detrimental to the organization, which may include violations of this EDI policy.
- 6. Relation to RNA Canada ARN By-Laws and host institution's policies**
- a. This Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy is meant to complement the RNA Canada ARN By-Laws. In doubt, the By-Laws take precedence over this policy.
  - b. All members of RNA Canada ARN are expected to adhere to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policies of their respective host institutions. In doubt, the host institution's policies will take precedence over the RNA Canada ARN policy.

*Note:*

*Two equity, diversity, and inclusion guidelines have been developed to accompany this policy: guidelines for the committee membership and practises and guidelines for the organization of events, in particular conferences. Other guideline documents will be developed in the future as RNA Canada ARN needs evolve. These guidelines will be linked to this Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy of RNA Canada ARN.*

**The following resources informed the development of this Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy:**

1. Government of Canada -Guide on Equity, Diversity and inclusion Terminology: <https://www.noslangues-ourlangues.gc.ca/en/publications/equite-diversite-inclusion-equity-diversity-inclusion-eng>
2. University of Saskatchewan: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy 2020 <https://policies.usask.ca/policies/equity/equity-diversity-inclusion.php#top>  
Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence in Exciton Science 2020: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy: <https://excitonscience.com/equity-diversity-and-inclusion-policy>
3. Canadian Wood Council (CWC): Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy: <https://cwc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CWC-Equity-Diversity-Inclusion-Policy.pdf>
4. uOttawa Faculty of Education: Equity, diversity, Inclusion, and Antiracism Policy <https://www.uottawa.ca/faculty-education/about/governance/equity-diversity-inclusion-antiracism-policy>
5. UManitoba Rady Faculty of Health Sciences: Equity Diversity & Inclusion Policy 2020: <https://umanitoba.ca/health-sciences/sites/health-sciences/files/2020-11/rfhs-edi-policy.pdf>

6. *Canada Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC) – New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF): Best practises in equity, diversity and inclusion in research practise and design 2022: <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/edi-eng.aspx>*

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