

Canada Research Chairs EDI Action Plan

Emily Carr University

2026

Canada Research Chairs EDI Action Plan

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About

In 2022, Emily Carr University engaged Inclusive Excellence Strategy Solutions Inc. to review our Canada Research Chairs (CRC) recruitment, nomination and retention processes. The goal: identify potential barriers and support ECU's efforts to meet and exceed CRC equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) requirements. The resulting action plan builds on that report, with further input from ECU staff.

Our CRC EDI Action Plan aims to increase transparency in how Chairs are allocated, selected and renewed, especially for members of the four designated groups (FDGs):

- racialized individuals
- Indigenous Peoples
- persons with disabilities
- women and gender equity-seeking groups

The plan supports our ability to attract, retain and advance CRCs from FDGs, while aligning with both our Strategic Research Plan and broader institutional EDI goals.

The plan will continue to evolve over time in response to guidance from the Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat (TIPS) and the Canada Research Chairs Program (CRCP), and ongoing institutional learning.

An earlier version of this plan was published in July 2024. The current version reflects changes made in 2026 to align with updated CRCP guidance.

CRC Equity Targets

The Canada Research Chairs Program sets equity targets for each participating institution.

Emily Carr University currently holds an allocation of five Tier 2 CRCs, which are used to attract and retain internationally recognized leaders in art, design and research. As of 2026, ECU is meeting all of the program's EDI requirements.

EDI Commitment and Strategy

ECU acknowledges that systemic barriers within research and employment systems — including recruitment, evaluation and support — continue to shape who is recognized as a researcher.

Barriers are not experienced in the same way by all individuals. Researchers may face multiple and overlapping barriers related to factors such as race, Indigeneity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background or other aspects of identity. We are committed to identifying and removing these barriers; fostering equitable access to CRC opportunities; and creating research environments where all researchers, including but not limited to members of the four federally designated groups, can fulfill their academic, research and employment goals.

This work is guided by [ECU's Strategic Research Plan](#), institutional EDI commitments, and the principles articulated by the Tri-Agency Institutional Programs Secretariat. It also aligns with ECU's endorsement of the Dimensions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Canada Charter and its focus on addressing systemic barriers and strengthening equity in research environments.

Advancing EDI requires ongoing learning and organizational change. To support a shared understanding of EDI and to strengthen institutional capacity for change, we have implemented several research related and institutional initiatives over the past five years:

- Established a Research Advisory Committee to review and integrate community consultation results into our 2023–28 Strategic Research Plan with a strong focus on EDI.
- Secured funding through the NSERC EDI Capacity Building Grant (2021–2024) to support systems-level EDI initiatives across research and university operations, including the development of institutional resources and capacity building activities.
- Delivered EDI focused learning opportunities for faculty and staff to strengthen institutional understanding of systemic barriers, inclusive practices and equitable workplace cultures. An example was our EDI Symposium for Faculty and Staff, held in August 2024.

- Developed an EDI Toolkit in 2024 to support the creation and review of equitable and inclusive policies and procedures.

These initiatives have strengthened our capacity to advance EDI within research and the university more broadly and continue to inform the implementation of this Action Plan. Building on this foundation, ECU will continue to develop resources, supports and engagement opportunities that promote equity, inclusion and accessibility in research and in the workplace.

Supporting EDI Initiatives Through Shared Responsibility

Efforts to advance equity, diversity and inclusion may encounter questions, concerns or resistance. EDI work can also place disproportionate demands on faculty and staff from equity-deserving groups.

ECU will support those engaged in CRC-related EDI work through shared responsibility models that distribute this work more equitably across the institution, working with multiple departments and EDI champions across the university. We will also take a proactive and structured approach to anticipating and addressing resistance, including:

- Embedding EDI responsibilities within leadership roles, hiring committees, and Accountability Leads.
- Requiring completion of EDI training and adherence to EDI-informed processes as part of participation in CRC recruitment, nomination, and evaluation.
- Providing a formal mechanism for raising concerns related to EDI in CRC processes; concerns will be directed to the Associate Vice-President, Human Resources, who will consult with the President to determine an appropriate response.

Co-Creation and Ongoing Engagement

The development of this Action Plan was informed by interviews, surveys, community consultation and external expertise. The findings and perspectives gathered through these processes shaped the priorities and actions outlined in this plan and will continue to guide its implementation and refinement.

Ongoing engagement will build on existing consultation findings and institutional knowledge wherever possible to avoid engagement fatigue and the disproportionate burden often placed on equity-deserving communities. Where additional input is required, ECU will seek meaningful engagement that is respectful of participants' time, expertise and lived experience. This includes seeking perspectives from individuals with intersecting identities.

Feedback gathered through implementation activities, including check-ins and exit interviews with CRC chairholders, will be used to assess progress and inform future revisions to this plan.

Consistent with ECU's expertise in art and design, we will use creative and visual tools where appropriate to communicate progress and share learning as this plan is implemented. This includes creating accessible digital resources such as visualizations, infographics and process maps and other forms of knowledge sharing that support engagement with diverse audiences and promote broader awareness of EDI initiatives and outcomes.

Environmental Review

ECU conducted a voluntary, institution-wide Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Survey in 2023 that collected quantitative and qualitative data from students, faculty, and staff on experiences of inclusion, access to institutional resources, participation in decision-making, accommodation, and perceptions of equity and anti-discrimination across the university.

Survey results showed that faculty reported less inclusion in decision-making than students and staff. Faculty who identified as members of equity-denied groups — including Indigenous, racialized, disabled, 2SLGBTQIA+, non-binary, and first-generation immigrant respondents — reported lower levels of belonging and less confidence in equitable access to opportunities. Barriers may be compounded for individuals who identify with more than one equity-denied group, affecting experiences of belonging, access and participation in different ways.

The survey also identified accommodation and accessibility as ongoing barriers for faculty, particularly in relation to accessing resources, participation in decision-making, and confidence in institutional processes for requesting and receiving support.

These findings highlight institutional conditions that are directly relevant to CRC recruitment, nomination and retention. Equitable access to opportunities and confidence in institutional supports are essential for attracting and retaining CRC chairholders. The objectives and actions in this plan that apply an EDI lens to CRC recruitment and nomination processes and that strengthen support for short-listed candidates, CRC nominees and chairholders, were developed in response to these findings.

Employment Systems Review

Prior to the institution-wide EDI Survey, ECU engaged Inclusive Excellence Strategy Solutions Inc. between February and September 2023 to review CRC recruitment and retention pathways and faculty hiring and employment practices at ECU. The review drew on analysis of relevant policies and procedures, interviews and consultations with faculty, and consultations with representatives from the Research Office and Human Resources to identify potential barriers and opportunities for improving CRC recruitment, nomination and retention processes.

The review identified employment-related practices that were informal or implicit, including the negotiation of CRC employment terms, workload expectations, and preparation for transition from the CRC role to regular faculty appointments. It also highlighted the need for greater alignment between the CRC nomination process and ECU's

established faculty hiring procedures, including the use of consistent evaluation practices. These gaps were identified as having a direct impact on CRC experience, retention and equity.

The findings informed the development of clearer, more consistent employment processes and supports for CRC chairholders outlined in this plan, including support for transitions from CRC roles to regular faculty appointments, and conducting exit interviews with CRCs to inform ongoing program improvement.

Comparative Review

The external CRC pathway review conducted by Inclusive Excellence Strategy Solutions, Inc. also included a comparison of ECU's CRC processes against Canada Research Chairs Program guidance and equity-informed best practices. Given the small number of CRCs at ECU, this comparison focused on alignment with CRCP guidance and best practices rather than comparisons between individual chairholders.

The review examined how CRC recruitment, nomination, and evaluation processes were structured and communicated, including job posting language, hiring committee composition, evaluation processes and communication of supports for nominees and chairholders.

These findings informed specific objectives and actions in this plan to improve the structure, transparency and consistency of the CRC recruitment, nomination and retention processes. This includes the use of standardized job posting language, clearly defined hiring committee composition, and structured evaluation tools and EDI education for CRC hiring committee members to support consistent, equity-informed decision-making.

Focus Areas for Improvement

Interviews, consultation and an institution-wide survey identified the following broad areas for improvement which form the foundation for establishing future objectives and actions:



- Increased clarity and transparency around the nomination process, including who is involved in decision-making and how those decisions are documented.
- Greater consistency and rigor in how nominees are evaluated, with stronger alignment to ECUAD's faculty hiring process, as outlined in the *Collective Agreement Between Emily Carr University of Art + Design and the Emily Carr Faculty Association*.
- Structural implementation of [best practices](#) for hiring and retaining CRCs from the four designated groups (FDGs). As part of standardizing the CRC nomination process, the CRCP recommends practices proven to support greater diversity in hiring.

Accountability Leads

Accountability Leads are responsible for implementing the objectives and protocols outlined in the CRC EDI Action Plan. They either carry out specific tasks directly or delegate projects to other university units as needed.

In this role, Accountability Leads monitor progress, identify challenges and provide updates to the university community engaged in the CRC process.

They also adapt strategies as necessary to ensure alignment with broader institutional goals and to promote a culture of accountability.

By leading with transparency and responsibility, Accountability Leads play a key role in advancing EDI efforts and helping ECU meet and exceed CRC requirements and guidance.

CRC Lifecycle and EDI Interventions Map

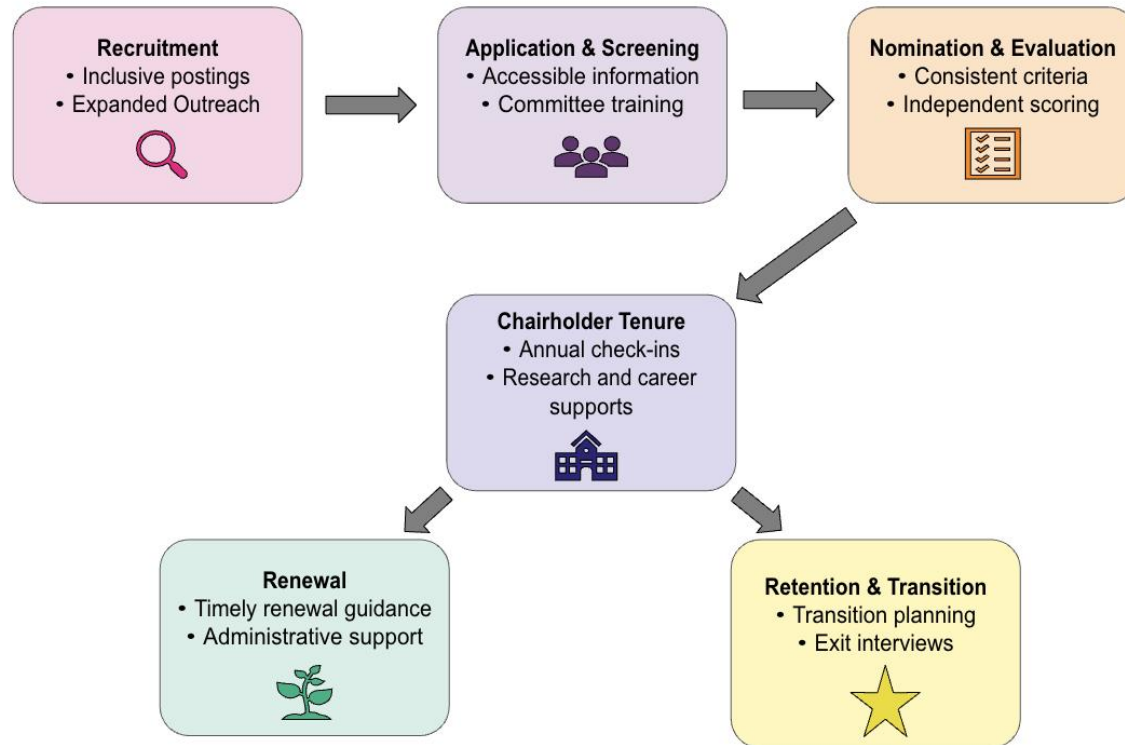


Figure 1: This diagram illustrates how the plan's objectives and EDI interventions align with key stages of the CRC lifecycle. Detailed actions can be found in the objectives table.

Objectives

This plan outlines 10 key objectives, informed by the Canada Research Chairs Program’s recommended “promising practices” for advancing equity in hiring and by findings from the environmental, employment systems and comparative reviews described above.

- 7 Short-Term Objectives for implementation in current and upcoming CRC searches
- 2 Medium-Term Objectives for continued and iterative implementation
- 1 Long-term Objective for ensuring sustainable connection with Indigenous communities

Each objective includes associated actions, progress indicators, and accountability leads to support implementation and monitoring of progress.

The short-term objectives and actions outlined in the table below were applied in the CRC search conducted in Fall 2023. This plan formalizes those practices and supports their consistent implementation in current and future CRC searches.

[The Canada Research Chairs Best Practices Guide](#) is referenced throughout; any other references are specifically noted.

Time Period	Objectives	Actions	Progress Indicators	Accountability Lead
Short-term	1. Embed EDI and accessibility considerations into CRC recruitment and nomination processes.	a. Identify an EDI advisor or designate to review key recruitment materials and processes, advise on inclusive outreach and accessibility, support the hiring committee in applying EDI informed	a. EDI advisor / designate is identified, their responsibilities are documented, and their input is incorporated at each stage of the CRC process.	HR, AVP Research

	Barrier addressed: Lack of clear accountability for applying EDI practices to CRC processes (Employment Systems Review).	evaluation practices, and identify potential barriers and recommend adjustments.		
	2. Align CRC research themes with ECU's commitments to Indigenization and reconciliation.	a. Consult with Indigenous faculty and researchers, and review the Strategic Research Plan and ECU's EDI priorities, to ensure the selected CRC research theme advances Indigenization and reconciliation.	a. CRC themes demonstrate alignment with the Strategic Plan and Strategic Research Plan commitments to Indigenization and reconciliation. Relevant consultation is documented as appropriate.	VP Academic + Provost, AGP, AVP Research, Research Office
	3. Ensure CRC hiring committees mitigate bias and reflect EDI principles. Barrier addressed:	a. Per the CRC guidelines, ensure that the Hiring Committee includes a minimum of one individual from one of the four designated groups as required by the CRCP, and endeavour to increase representation	a. The composition of Hiring Committees consistently meet or exceed CRCP requirements and all committee members complete required EDI training prior to	AVP Research, HR, Research Office

	<p>Inequitable participation in decision-making processes, particularly for equity-denied groups (Environmental Review; Employment Systems Review).</p>	<p>wherever possible on hiring committees.</p> <p>b. For EDI training, ensure fundamental training is completed such as unconscious bias or key terms in EDI, and aim to move towards learning on active listening and communication, providing and accepting feedback, allyship, etc.</p>	<p>participating in CRC recruitment processes.</p>	
	<p>4. Broaden access to CRC opportunities.</p> <p>Barrier addressed: Limited awareness of opportunities and uneven access to information that supports participation in CRC processes (Comparative Review;</p>	<p>a. Utilize the CRC guidelines in the use of inclusive, unbiased, ungendered language, to update CRC postings.</p> <p>b. Ensure the self-ID data collection protocols follow meaningful practices and align with privacy and confidentiality protocols and EDI data collection practices followed at ECU.</p> <p>c. Clearly communicate why self-ID data collection is crucial in the job posting.</p>	<p>a. CRC postings consistently use inclusive language aligned with CRC guidelines.</p> <p>b. CRC postings clearly communicate the purpose of self-ID data collection; protocols follow privacy and confidentiality standards.</p> <p>c. Diversity of applicant pools is monitored using self-ID data in compliance with privacy standards, with</p>	<p>HR, AVP Research, Research Office</p>

	Environmental Review).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Consult with community members to expand the list of offline and online sites and networks that the job posting could be circulated. e. Advertise the job post in a variety of sites and networks to increase visibility and support broader and more diverse outreach. f. Host info sessions for the position (recorded and uploaded to the website). 	<p>consideration of intersecting identities where appropriate and where confidentiality can be maintained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. CRC postings are circulated through expanded sites and networks identified through consultation with community members. e. Information sessions are offered in an accessible format for each CRC search. 	
	<p>5. Standardize candidate evaluation practices to support fair and transparent assessment.</p> <p>Barrier addressed: Lack of transparency and consistency in evaluation processes (Employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review the evaluation matrix with each CRC Hiring Committee before candidate interviews. b. Require all CRC Hiring Committee members to submit independent scores before discussing candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All Hiring Committee members review the evaluation matrix prior to candidate interviews and submit independent candidate scores prior to committee discussions for each CRC search. b. All candidates are assessed using the same criteria, and evaluation records confirm those criteria are applied consistently. 	AVP Research, Hiring Committee, Research Office

	Systems Review).			
	<p>6. Provide equitable support for the short-listed candidates.</p> <p>Barrier addressed: Unequal access to institutional supports, including interview preparation and process information (Employment Systems Review; Environmental Review).</p>	<p>a. Schedule a Q&A hour with short-listed candidates to support them before the interview process.</p> <p>b. Provide the short-listed candidates with interview questions beforehand.</p>	<p>a. Pre-interview Q & A sessions are offered to short-listed candidates.</p> <p>b. All short-listed candidates receive interview questions in advance.</p>	HR, AVP Research, Research Office
	<p>7. Support nominees in the CRC nomination submission process.</p>	<p>a. Provide comprehensive guidance to the nominee on their nomination submission process.</p>	<p>a. Nominees receive clear guidance on the nomination submission process.</p>	AVP Research, Research Office

	<p>Barrier addressed: Unequal access to nomination submission support and process guidance (Employment Systems Review; Environmental Review).</p>	<p>b. Schedule office hours, on-demand support, and recurring meetings with the nominees.</p>	<p>b. Meetings and on-demand support are offered to nominees during the application process.</p>	
Medium-term	<p>8. Institutionalize and maintain standardized CRC search, nomination and application processes.</p> <p>Barrier addressed: Lack of transparency and consistency in CRC search, nomination and application processes (Comparative Review;</p>	<p>a. Develop and implement a CRC posting template with considerations for inclusive language.</p> <p>b. Increase the applicant pool by diversifying the channels for job advertisements.</p> <p>c. Develop EDI training curriculum for CRC hiring committees.</p> <p>d. Develop guidelines for preparing nominees for the application.</p>	<p>a. A standardized CRC posting template is used and postings are advertised beyond ECU's standard recruitment channels for each CRC search.</p> <p>b. CRC hiring committee members complete required EDI training prior to participating in CRC recruitment processes.</p> <p>c. CRC nominees receive guidelines and ongoing</p>	<p>AVP Research, HR, Research Office</p>

	Employment Systems Review).	e. Check-in with the nominee regularly throughout the application process.	support during the application process.	
	<p>9. Support CRC chairholders' research success, retention, and transition to faculty roles.</p> <p>Barrier addressed: Inequities in retention conditions, institutional supports and transition practices (Employment Systems Review; Environmental Review; Comparative Review).</p>	<p>a. Informing the chairholder about possible professional development opportunities, research networks, and similar support systems available to them.</p> <p>b. Supporting the chairholder with community connections and engagements such as research talks, studio visits, guest speaker or panel appearances, etc.</p> <p>c. Structured check-ins are held annually with CRC chairholders to assess experiences with institutional supports, workload, and research environment.</p> <p>d. Informing the chairholder about renewal process in</p>	<p>a. CRC chairholders regularly receive information and opportunities related to professional development, research networks, and community engagement.</p> <p>b. Feedback gathered through annual check-ins is documented and reviewed to identify any barriers and inform adjustments to supports and processes; trends in chairholder experiences are monitored over time to support ongoing program improvements.</p> <p>c. All CRC chairholders receive guidance and administrative support</p>	VP Academic + Provost, HR, AVP Research, Research Office

		<p>a timely manner so they can start preparing earlier, providing them with necessary administrative support for the renewal.</p> <p>e. Establishing a standard protocol for transitioning from the CRC role to a regular faculty role, especially to set clear expectations on what teaching load will look like.</p> <p>f. Conducting exit interviews with the CRCs who are transitioning to a faculty role and utilizing their insights to improve the program.</p>	<p>for the CRC renewal process.</p> <p>d. A transition protocol is established for CRC chairholders moving to faculty roles.</p> <p>e. Transition discussions begin no later than 18 months before the end of a Chair appointment; teaching load expectations are communicated in writing prior to transition; CRC chairholders report confidence in their understanding of the transition process.</p> <p>f. Exit interviews are conducted with Chairs. Themes are documented and used to inform updates to CRC processes.</p>	

Long-term	10. Establish culturally appropriate consultation with host nations to ensure our CRC program supports Indigenous research and community needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with ECU leadership and staff to develop pathways for consultation on research and our CRC program. b. Develop opportunities to share ECU's research priorities and CRC plans with members and representatives of the host nations through culturally relevant relationship-building and information sharing. c. Support ongoing relationships with local Indigenous researchers and communities to inform the CRC process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consultation pathways are established with host nations. Ongoing relationships continue to inform CRC processes and program activities, and input from host nations is reflected where appropriate. 	President, AVP Research
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