

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION Progress Report 2024 - Canada Research Chair Program (CRCP)

Key institutional actions in support of EDI in the CRCP

### Key EDI action #1

- Describe the key action that was undertaken.

UBC implemented a special program restricting four CRC positions for scholars with disabilities. This special program was based on lessons from previous preferential-hiring strategies. It required the Equity & Inclusion Office (EIO) and the Office of the Vice-President Research & Innovation (OVPRI) to consult with Deans, Associate Deans of Research, and Department Heads to develop and clarify application criteria and to ensure that equitable hiring practices would be incorporated and maintained at all stages of the process. An adjudication committee reviewed applications and allocated these CRC positions based on established criteria, including assurances that units would use equitable recruitment practices and support the retention of new CRCs.

The [Employment Equity Advisor training program](#) and [Guide to Equitable Hiring Practices](#) were incorporated into program materials for these (and other) CRC searches, to support a better understanding of concrete steps to build an equitable recruitment process. These initiatives, building on past CRCP stipend-supported EDIAP work, included continuing to pilot the [Template for Equitable CRC Assessment Criteria](#) to expand search committee members' understanding of how to assess research productivity and potential more equitably. Specific support and consultation were provided to faculties and departments through the Center for Workplace Accessibility (CWA) and the [Workplace Accommodations Fund](#).

- Did this action relate to an objective named in your CRCP EDI Action Plan?

**Yes. Briefly describe the related objective.**

Revise recruitment practices to ensure latest evidence of best practices is implemented in all CRC search processes, and that new institutional requirements from the CRCP are being met or exceeded (a part of Goal 1): UBC's CRCs are

recruited through an open and transparent process, making use of evidence-based strategies to ensure that merit and excellence are identified among historically and currently under-represented groups of researchers, and that UBC is attracting excellent applicants who are representative of the diversity of researchers available within and outside of UBC.

**Describe outcomes and impacts this action supported during the reporting period.**

Outcomes and impacts of this action include:

1. Achieving proportional representation among UBC's active CRC chairholders that is comparable to the Canadian population
2. Testing and solidifying a special call process to implement a restricted call for CRCs with disabilities that addresses privacy, confidentiality, other concerns and issues, and support mechanisms required
3. Elevating awareness of disabled researchers in the academy, and the excellence among applicants for these chairs
4. Broadening the awareness and reach of the Employment Equity Advisor training program and accompanying Guide to Equitable Hiring Practices – Faculty.

**Describe any challenges encountered in undertaking this action, and any mitigation strategies that were employed.**

Challenges Encountered:

1. Ableism biases and discrimination in the academy create overlapping challenges with ensuring proportional representation as set out in the [Equitable Research Productivity Assessments Report](#). This means that scholars with invisible disabilities can be discouraged from self-identifying as having a disability. Challenges are compounded if the disabled scholar also has other marginalized identities.
2. Accessibility & accommodations support processes are less widely known and require engagement of people with varying levels of knowledge and capacity to provide support appropriately while respecting privacy and confidentiality.

Mitigation strategies included:

1. Renewing the British Columbia Office of the Human Rights Commissioner Special Program to support CRC recruitment focused on mitigating under-representation in this program.
2. Organizing an information session to establish clear eligibility criteria and facilitating discussions among Deans, Department Heads, review panel members, and Associate Deans of Research to ensure consistent processes for safeguarding personal data, handling information sensitively, and

addressing applicant concerns appropriately.

3. Ensuring that information about how to access support for accessibility needs and accommodations was available at multiple points in the recruitment and onboarding process.

## **Key EDI action #2**

- Describe the key action that was undertaken.

The [Workplace Accessibility & Inclusion Action Research Toolkit](#) was developed and user-tested. This toolkit is designed to enable departments and units to have meaningful conversations among their faculty and staff about disability in the workplace and to equip them with resources and guidance to advance accessibility and inclusion. UBC is a complex social system. Change doesn't follow a simple formula. It requires thoughtful reflection, adaptation, and learning. This toolkit supports that process, which involves:

- Agreeing on issues identified in the workplace
- Developing and testing hypotheses for addressing the issues
- Implementing actions and observing what changes
- Reflecting on results and adjusting strategies based on what's been learned
- Sharing that learning through institutional reporting mechanisms.

Documents, plans, tools, and resources from many sources informed the development of the toolkit. Toolkit contents were reviewed and refined by staff, faculty, and students with lived experience of disability, expertise in instructional design, accessibility, and accommodations, and in various change processes and conflict transformation tools and techniques. Experience from the design, implementation, and ongoing use of the Activating Inclusion and Indigenous Strategic Plan toolkits at UBC also informed the approaches and platform used to host the toolkit. Considerations included how to balance the various degrees of expertise and exposure to ableism, disability, accessibility, and inclusion across the university, while recognizing that departments and units face multiple priorities and that building momentum requires flexible formats and support adapted to particular contexts.

- **Did this action relate to an objective named in your CRCP EDI Action Plan?**

Yes. Briefly describe the related objective.

**Objective #4. Supporting Excellence in an Inclusive Environment:** Ensure CRCs are fully aware of the support available and have the accessible and inclusive work environments necessary to succeed in their terms and career paths.

Under Goal 2: UBC's Canada Research Chairs are representative of the diversity of talented researchers available within and outside of UBC, producing and disseminating new knowledge, building a more inclusive research culture, and collaborating and innovating with their peers while feeling supported and included in a diverse culture of research excellence.

**Describe outcomes and impacts this action supported during the reporting period.**

The [Workplace Accessibility & Inclusion Action Research \(AIAR\) Toolkit](#) is available to support those departments who have CRCs with disabilities or are recruiting CRCs with disabilities to 1) build capacity to understand the ways ableism can show up in the workplace, 2) support them to develop strategies to address ableism and disableism in their own particular context, and 3) enhance accessibility and inclusion for everyone in the unit.

Accessibility considerations have informed the publication of the complete toolkit in PDF, Word plain text, and Word PDF formats, which means that the toolkit contents are available across and beyond UBC (with a Canvas Catalog account), and the option within UBC to register for a private learning space is not a limiting factor for units desiring more flexibility.

UBC's Workplace Learning Platform has been used as a design choice to pilot interactive, private collaboration spaces for departments, units, and teams as they move through the toolkit processes, and review the various options (anonymous and not) provided for obtaining opinions, recording conversations and learning, and giving feedback.

The Workplace AIAR Toolkit is available to support academic and non-academic departments, units, and teams across UBC who are aware of the new Accessible BC Act and interested in understanding how they can support greater workplace accessibility.

- **Describe any challenges encountered in undertaking this action, and any mitigation strategies that were employed.**

Challenges:

1. Ensuring the toolkit and its resources were focused on capacity-building, planning, and evidence-based learning about effective strategies that

formed the vision for this toolkit.

2. Ensuring that the focus was effectively balanced between addressing workplaces with experience and expertise in accessibility and accommodations who wished to explore further action, and those workplaces with minimal previous attention to accessibility and accommodations.
3. Ensuring that the contents were provided in accessible and engaging ways.
4. Ensuring that the contents, concepts, instructional design, processes, tools, and resources were offered in ways that aligned with the aspirations of disability justice as an approach.

Mitigation strategies:

1. Careful and iterative consultation with various experts in various fields and experience to work through the questions above in preparation for piloting.
2. Ensuring that the project plan includes an opportunity for revisions at the end of the pilot period.

### **Key EDI action #3**

- **Describe the key action that was undertaken.**

UBC continues to deploy the [Guide to Equitable Hiring Practices: Faculty Recruitment](#) to support understanding of inclusive excellence principles, ensure clarity around good practices across UBC, and provide guidance on CRC appointments through other channels institution-wide.

During FY24/25, UBC held four additional full-day [Employment Equity Advisor \(EEA\) Training](#) workshops to enhance understanding of the practical applications of good hiring practices. This program, the development and piloting of which was funded by the 2023/24 CRCP Stipend, was evaluated in 2023/24, and post-workshop evaluations during FY24/25 continue to inform enhancements to the training sessions. Bi-monthly virtual learning sessions for a community of practice support EEAs in their roles in their departments and offer the opportunity for faculty members on hiring committees to share wisdom and experience when encountering issues of equity in various processes.

The Guide, the training program and the virtual learning sessions offer opportunities to enhance and reinforce understanding of particular aspects of equitable hiring: how to ensure accessibility and appropriate accommodations during the interview process, how to use demographic data appropriately,

how to intervene in conversations that confuse a demographic characteristic with a qualification or dismiss broad-based scholarship in favour of narrow H-Index metrics or “fit”, etc.

- **Did this action relate to an objective named in your CRCP EDI Action Plan?**

**Yes. Briefly describe the related objective.**

Revise recruitment practices to ensure the latest evidence of best practices is implemented in all CRC search processes, and that new institutional requirements from the CRCP are being met or exceeded (under Goal 1).

- **Describe outcomes and impacts this action supported during the reporting period.**

To date, approximately 200 people have participated in the EEA training workshops across both campuses. Through iterative review of feedback from these workshops, the training content has been refined to clarify key aspects of equitable hiring.

While gaps still exist and the overall picture is complex and nuanced regarding equitable representation among faculty and staff at UBC, as shown in the [2024 Annual Employment Equity Report](#), representation of employment equity groups among the workforce at UBC is trending upwards.

- **Describe any challenges encountered in undertaking this action, and any mitigation strategies that were employed.**

Participation in a full-day workshop requires an intentional commitment, particularly from faculty members already serving on search committees. For the pilot of this program, faculty members from departments with imminent CRC searches or who serve as advisors on equitable recruitment at the Faculty level were offered a stipend to attend the workshop.

### **3. b) CRCP Stipend for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Rate the importance the CRCP Stipend for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion has had on your institution in making progress in implementing measures to address systemic barriers:

[One selection possible]

☐ Not important

- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ **Very important**
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Not applicable

### 3. c) Other EDI initiatives

Provide an example of an EDI initiative underway at the institution – that is broader than those tied to the CRCP that is 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 in the box below. URLs should include https://. Note that collecting this information is a requirement of the 2019 Addendum to the 2006 Canadian Human Rights Settlement Agreement (clause 39.e) and provides context for the work the institution is doing in addressing barriers for the CRCP. (Maximum 2000 characters)

Introduced in 2023 by the Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion (AVPEI), the [Strategic Equity & Anti-Racism Framework](#) is a community-engaged, data-informed, action-oriented, and accountability-driven planning tool developed to guide the implementation of equity and anti-racism priorities and the cyclical evaluation of progress over the next three to five years.

The framework is built around four broad institutional domains of change—structural, curricular, compositional, and interactional—and six principles of practice. Using the framework, the Equity & Inclusion Office (EIO) reviewed UBC’s existing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)-related plans and reports, including UBC’s CRC EDI Action Plan, UBC’s Dimensions Action Plan, and the Inclusion Action Plan to identify salient objectives and strategic actions that constitute the [StEAR Roadmap for Change](#).

A [StEAR governance](#) model provides an accountability structure and establishes lines of communication, consultation, and engagement with Equity Leads, EDI champions, and HPSM community groups.

Additionally, efforts will be made to build leaders' competencies and capacities to act as change agents, to develop reporting and accountability mechanisms, and to establish quantitative and qualitative measures and methods to track progress.

The [StEAR Roadmap for Change](#) sets out 18 salient objectives and numerous strategic actions within the StEAR framework, to be implemented over the next three to five years.

As a living document, the roadmap is updated to reflect [new plans and reports](#) as well as signal progress on strategic actions. Implementation sponsors, leads, and partners have been identified for each strategic action and will be included in subsequent versions of the roadmap.