

SSHRC  CRSH

# ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE FOR CANADA'S FUTURE

ENABLING EXCELLENCE, BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS,  
CONNECTING RESEARCH TO CANADIANS



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

SSHRC'S STRATEGIC PLAN TO 2020

Canada 

Social sciences and humanities research addresses critical questions about who we are as human beings, what we need in order to thrive in complex and challenging times, and where we are headed in the years ahead. It enhances our ability to understand and creatively respond to complex individual, social, cultural and economic issues. It informs and enriches the lives of Canadians.

By developing talent, generating insights and forging connections across campuses and communities, SSHRC's support for world-leading research and training contributes to a better future for Canada and the world.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Research supported by SSHRC involves the deepest levels of inquiry into who we are and what we need to be informed, engaged and inspired, both as individuals and as a society.

Findings from this research are used by—and often, developed with—stakeholders across all sectors, to improve our quality of life, enrich cultural expression, and drive prosperity, equity and sustainability through innovation. The humanities and social sciences have contributed much to our understanding and appreciation of Canada's rich history, ethnic and cultural diversity and dynamic rural and urban economies.

For 39 years, SSHRC has continued to meet the high standards that both the research community and Canadians at large expect of us. We are enabled

by a strong governance structure that draws on expertise from the academic community, business and civil society. We are committed to continuous improvement in the delivery of our programs and funding opportunities.

All of this we undertake as stewards of public funds and the public trust, responsible for using resources wisely and well and accountable to the Canadian people.

Our 2016-20 strategic plan reflects both these commitments and our mandate in support of scholarship and training in the social sciences and humanities. Over the next four years, it will help guide the efforts of our skilled and dedicated staff as we work to enable excellence, create new opportunities for research and training, connect research to Canadians, and, ultimately, advance knowledge for a better Canada.



**TED HEWITT**  
PRESIDENT, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND  
HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL



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## SSHRC'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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Through grants, fellowships and scholarships, SSHRC helps Canada's researchers and research institutions do what they do best: train the next generation of talented, creative thinkers and doers; build knowledge and understanding about people, cultures and societies; and drive the innovations that address the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) is the Canadian federal agency mandated to promote and support postsecondary-based research and training in the humanities and social sciences (SSH).

Through the *Talent* program, students and postdoctoral fellows develop skills and expertise in critical thinking, complex decision-making and creative exploration.

Through the *Insight* program, new knowledge and understanding is created by individuals, teams of researchers and formal partnerships across disciplines and sectors.

Through the *Connection* program, research knowledge is mobilized to inform Canadian and international research, debate, decisions and actions.

SSHRC also administers four tri-agency programs: the Canada Research Chairs Program, Canada Excellence Research Chairs Program, Canada First Research Excellence Fund and Research Support Fund, which contribute to Canada's institutional research capacity across disciplines and areas of research.

SSHRC supports a research community of 24,000 full-time university professors and over 67,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers—representing roughly 45 per cent of Canada's university researchers—not counting the hundreds of thousands of undergraduate and diploma students engaged in research at universities and colleges across the country.

The work undertaken by these researchers—in fields ranging from accounting and anthropology to urban geography and visual arts—is fostering innovation across sectors, informing complex policy decisions and mobilizing some of our best minds, both to explore and expand our cultural heritage and to address the critical challenges facing us all in the coming decades.



## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

# A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

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Over the course of its 39-year history, SSHRC has proven its steadfast commitment to building a better future for Canada and the world.

SSHRC is a nimble, responsive and adaptive organization. Unequivocally, our strength lies in our people. Their efforts have made SSHRC a recognized leader—in Canada and internationally—in research funding and the administration of public funds.

What SSHRC delivers is research excellence for Canada. Our ability to do so is directly tied to the council's merit review processes, which are aligned with international best practices for quality assurance in the awarding of research and research training grants. Over the years, SSHRC has ensured that its assessment criteria and merit review

processes have evolved, in keeping with the changing character of research itself.

SSHRC has also established strong collaborative relationships with research institutions and other organizations that have a stake in the future of Canada's higher education and innovation systems: postsecondary leaders, research administrators, policy-makers, industry allies and community partners. These relationships enable and inform SSHRC's approach to funding and operations.

**Over the past five years, SSHRC has taken deliberate steps forward to deliver on our mission. We have:**

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- ▶ dramatically simplified our program architecture, reducing 30 separate programs to three, with a limited number of funding opportunities in each;



## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

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- ▶ worked with the other granting agencies to harmonize delivery of the Canada Graduate Scholarships program for master's students;
- ▶ developed and implemented a tri-agency policy on open access, ensuring public access to the results of SSHRC-funded research;
- ▶ launched the \$1.5 billion Canada First Research Excellence Fund to help Canadian postsecondary institutions excel globally;
- ▶ established a new suite of SSHRC prizes to recognize research excellence in the social sciences and humanities, and the Storyteller's Challenge to highlight the exceptional efforts of students in communicating research results;
- ▶ broadened the participation of non-academic partners in SSHRC-funded projects, with over 300 industry, government and not-for-profit partners participating in projects awarded in 2014;
- ▶ launched the Community and College Social Innovation Fund, a path-breaking pilot program to enable colleges to partner with community organizations; and
- ▶ developed an integrated strategy to support research by and with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and other Indigenous Peoples, to ensure that research rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems can be reviewed and supported across all of SSHRC's funding opportunities.

This growing and recognized strength in social sciences and humanities research is a foundation for Canada's—and SSHRC's—future success.



## OUR CONTEXT

# A CHANGING RESEARCH LANDSCAPE

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Today's researchers operate in a vastly different environment than that which existed when SSHRC was created. We must continue evolving to effectively support excellent research and researchers, to the benefit of Canada and the world.

Great research addresses the key intellectual, social, cultural, technological, environmental and economic issues shaping our shared future. Driven by the spirit of creative inquiry and intellectual rigour, great research expands our knowledge of who we are, where we have been and where we are going. Such research is, of course, shaped by the landscape in which it is carried out.

**This strategic plan acknowledges both the profound changes faced by the research community and the central role that SSHRC will play in responding to, and shaping, the research environment in the years ahead:**

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- ▶ **Canada's universities and colleges are changing.** The expectations for postsecondary education and graduate training are changing, the role of research in Canada's colleges is growing, new models of postsecondary instruction are being explored and the dynamics of teaching, learning and research are shifting. SSHRC understands that we must work with Canadian postsecondary institutions and other organizations to build and sustain a strong and innovative research and training environment.





## OUR CONTEXT

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- ▶ The shape, nature and scope of research itself are in flux. New avenues of social sciences and humanities research are being charted via digital technologies, Indigenous knowledge and Aboriginal research, and research-creation. As new generations of researchers conduct research in new and different ways, SSHRC must be ready to recognize and enable their efforts.
  - ▶ Cross-sector collaboration is increasingly essential to put research to work for the benefit of Canadians. Non-academic sectors are recognizing the relevance and value of social sciences and humanities knowledge and skills.

SSHRC is helping build stronger relationships across and between sectors, leveraging these relationships to support new research ideas and talent.

- ▶ Increasingly, innovative research, talent development and knowledge mobilization initiatives cross borders. SSHRC believes in encouraging international and interdisciplinary projects as a means of enabling creativity and excellence.



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## SSHRC'S VISION FOR 2016-2020

Canada sustains and enhances its position as a global leader in humanities and social sciences research and research training, improving the lives of Canadians through ideas and innovation.

SSHRC will realize this goal by incorporating three strategic objectives across the range of its Talent, Insight and Connection programs and other activities over the next four years.

### Specifically, it will:



## ENABLE EXCELLENCE IN A CHANGING RESEARCH LANDSCAPE

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The research landscape is being transformed by the application of new methodologies, the use of powerful digital technologies, increasing international collaboration, the inclusion of multiple disciplinary perspectives and the engagement of non-academic sectors in creating and mobilizing knowledge.

In this environment, SSHRC's role is to recognize and facilitate diverse and changing forms of excellence in research and research training—both in terms of quality and impact—working in collaboration with postsecondary institutions, scholarly associations and other organizations.

SSHRC aims to contribute to a future research landscape that sees: more Canadian researchers and students successfully leveraging advances in new technologies, from virtual reality environments to increasingly sophisticated data analytics; more researchers engaged in interdisciplinary research within and beyond the humanities and social sciences; more research conducted by and with Aboriginal communities, to advance the creation of a vibrant, shared future for all Canadians; and more research results, both data and publications,

made readily accessible to Canadians. SSHRC will help ensure that Canada maintains and enhances its globally competitive position as a producer of high-calibre research, embracing new and diverse forms of research excellence.

### In pursuit of this objective, SSHRC will:

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- ▶ Promote both open access to research publications and the stewardship of research data through data management planning;
- ▶ Streamline the granting process to allow researchers to focus on research, by improving online systems for SSHRC and tri-agency grants and awards;
- ▶ Support and advance research conducted by and with Canada's Aboriginal communities; and
- ▶ Continue to support experimentation with novel disciplinary and interdisciplinary research methods and approaches, and with the use of new technologies and sources of data.





## CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCH AND TRAINING THROUGH COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

Collaboration among research funders and other stakeholders can increase the scope, scale and impact of Canada's research and training in the social sciences and humanities.

Joint initiatives among funders and other stakeholders offer many benefits to the research enterprise. They facilitate resource pooling and attract new sources of funding for all types and modes of research. They benefit the creation of new knowledge. They enable researchers to collaborate across disciplinary, geographic and sectoral boundaries. They enable new types of research, training and knowledge mobilization, bringing diverse perspectives to bear on the research process. They contribute to a dynamic training environment, preparing students to succeed within and beyond academia.

SSHRC aims to contribute to a future research landscape that sees: new and greater investment in SSH research from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors; increased social, cultural, economic and intellectual impact from SSHRC funding; and increased international collaboration, facilitating access to new ideas, talent and opportunities for researchers and students.

SSHRC will build new, strategic and promising opportunities for Canadian research, training and knowledge mobilization, through joint funding and other collaborative initiatives with funders and stakeholder organizations, in Canada and abroad.

### In pursuit of this objective, SSHRC will:

- ▶ Expand organizational partnerships to increase the scope, scale and impact of Canadian research and training in the social sciences and humanities;
- ▶ Work with other funding agencies around the world to fund collaborative research that responds to pressing global challenges; and
- ▶ Promote social sciences and humanities participation in large, interdisciplinary research endeavours, such as those supported by the Networks of Centres of Excellence and the Canada First Research Excellence Fund.

## CONNECT SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH WITH CANADIANS

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Social sciences and humanities knowledge can contribute to national debate, address the challenges of today and tomorrow, and produce new intellectual, economic, social and cultural value.

How will a changing climate affect Canada's coastal regions and Northern communities? Which kinds of infrastructural investments offer the greatest benefit to our growing cities? Can Canadian literature describing the immigrant experience speak to today's newcomers? How do we restore and maintain positive relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, in support of a shared successful future?

SSHRC-funded research explores these and other critical questions that matter to Canadians. SSHRC is committed to ensuring that the benefits of research and talent development are fully realized.

SSHRC aims to contribute to a future research landscape that sees: more public, private and not-for-profit organizations seeking out humanities and social sciences research knowledge and talent, recognizing the value it brings to their activities; Canadian researchers and research trainees more readily sharing and promoting research knowledge with non-academic sectors;

and increased recognition of the important contribution of the social sciences and humanities to Canadian innovation.

SSHRC will advance opportunities for the results of its funding—new ideas and trained people—to be more accessible to Canadian organizations in all sectors, to contribute to decision-making and innovation, and to help identify and address the challenges of today and tomorrow.

### In pursuit of this objective, SSHRC will:

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- ▶ Collaborate with the public, private, not-for-profit and academic sectors to address key current and future challenge areas for Canada;
- ▶ Increase opportunities for students to engage with non-academic sectors in internships and other innovative research-based learning initiatives;
- ▶ Work with students, researchers, research institutions and other stakeholders to better articulate the value and contribution of research; and
- ▶ Make SSHRC's own administrative data more easily accessible to the public.





# SSHRC STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

## SSHRC'S VISION FOR 2016-2020

Canada sustains and enhances its position as a global leader in humanities and social sciences research and research training, improving the lives of Canadians through ideas and innovation.

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Enable excellence  
in a changing research  
landscape

SSHRC will help ensure that Canada maintains and enhances its globally competitive position as a producer of high-calibre research, embracing new and diverse forms of research excellence.

2

Create opportunities for  
research and training through  
collaborative initiatives

SSHRC will build new, strategic and promising opportunities for Canadian research, training and knowledge mobilization, through joint funding and other collaborative initiatives with funders and stakeholder organizations, in Canada and abroad.

3

Connect social sciences  
and humanities research  
with Canadians

SSHRC will advance opportunities for the results of its funding—new ideas and trained people—to be more accessible to Canadian organizations in all sectors, to contribute to decision-making and innovation, and to address the challenges of today and tomorrow.