



FEDERATION FOR THE  
**HUMANITIES AND  
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

FÉDÉRATION  
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## **Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2023 Federal Budget**

**Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences**



## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Invest in future researchers by increasing the amount of funding support for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to adjust for inflation, and index the value of these funds to the consumer price index

**Recommendation 2:** Enhance the impact and reach of Canadian research by investing in open access publishing



## Introduction

Researchers in the humanities and social sciences (HSS) address our society's most important challenges, from racial justice to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, to the spread of misinformation. They preserve and mobilize knowledge about Canada, including history, language, culture, and our place in a rapidly changing world. The human skills frequently sought by employers, including communication, critical thinking and analytical skills, and the ability to work with, understand, and adapt to other people, are all hallmarks of an education in the humanities and social sciences.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many challenges, and increased the need for these human skills. It has underscored the importance of having complete and accurate information that can be reliably accessed in an environment polluted by dis- and misinformation.

However, we must do more as a country to support our next generation of knowledge leaders. The federal scholarships and fellowships that many graduate-student researchers depend on are losing their value due to rising costs and stagnant funding levels. As a result, it is more difficult for Canadians to expand their skills and attain advanced degrees, and more difficult for Canadian institutions to attract graduate students and remain competitive.

The declining value of these awards must not be ignored any longer. The Federal government must invest in our future scholars. If Canada is going to remain competitive, and attract, train, and retain the researchers it needs, the Federal government must reverse the decline in value of its graduate student scholarships and fellowships.

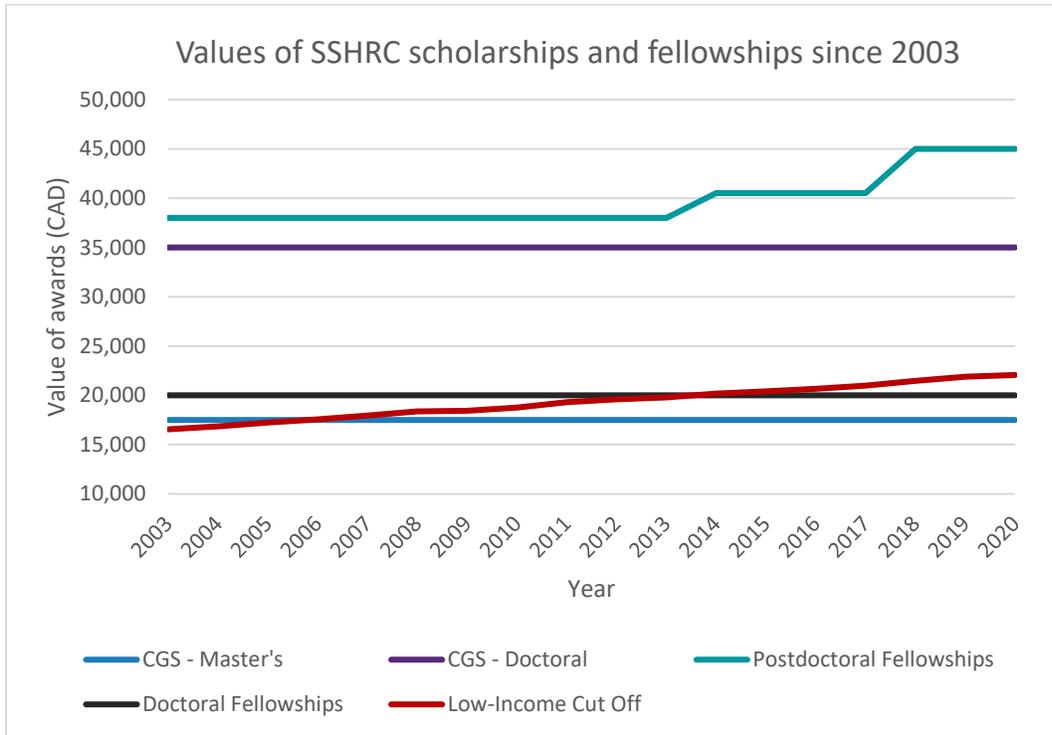
In addition to investing in future researchers, we are calling on the Federal government to support open access publishing. The costs of open access publishing, often borne by the researcher, are a barrier to accessing and applying valuable research findings. By investing in open access publishing, the Federal government can increase the reach and impact of Canadian research.

## Our recommendations

**Recommendation 1: Invest in future researchers by increasing the amount of funding support for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to adjust for inflation, and index the value of these funds to the consumer price index**

Federal scholarships and fellowships are critical to the development of future researchers and their amounts must increase to provide the support that graduate students and postdoctoral fellows require. In some instances, the amounts of these awards have not been adjusted for 19 years, and, as a result, rising costs are eroding their value to the point where a recipients' income is below the poverty line.

Figure 1: Graph of the values of SSHRC scholarships and fellowships from 2003-2020 plotted against Low-Income Cut Off data for the same time period (based on a single individual living in an urban area with a population greater than 500,000). Data sources: [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council](#), [Statistics Canada](#).



Similar trends are also observable in the Canada Research Chair (CRC) program funding. The award value had not changed since the CRC program was introduced in 2000, and declined by one third as of the year 2015.<sup>1</sup> The Federation was pleased to see actions taken to mitigate the declining value of the CRC program. The final report of Canada's Fundamental Science Review recommended adjusting the value of the CRCs and accounting for their loss in value due to inflation since 2000 (Recommendation 7.2),<sup>2</sup> while Budget 2018 committed \$210 million over five years to the CRCs to support early-career researchers and increase diversity among nominated researchers.<sup>3</sup> The funding programs for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows deserve the same attention and revitalization.

Graduate scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships must keep up with the cost of living. The value of the Canada Graduate Scholarships has decreased by 48% due to inflation during the past two decades, and the value of Postdoctoral Fellowships has declined by 14% since they were last adjusted four years ago. Fortunately, there is growing momentum to address this issue. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research recently recommended that the Federal government increase the

<sup>1</sup> Goss Gilroy Inc. 2016. Evaluation of the Canada Research Chair Program. Prepared for NSERC-SSHRC Evaluation Division.

<sup>2</sup> Advisory Panel for the Review of Federal Support for Fundamental Science. 2017. Investing in Canada's Future: Strengthening the Foundations of Canadian Research.

<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada. 2018. Equality & Growth: A Resilient Middle Class. Chapter 2 – Progress.



number of these graduate scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships, increase the value of the awards, and index the awards to the consumer price index.<sup>4</sup>

There is a continued need for these funds across disciplines to support advanced study, research, and training. Investing early in a scholar's career through graduate and postdoctoral funding provides important training, experience, and research opportunities for scholars to build upon throughout their careers, and enhances Canada's ability to attract and retain research talent. To ensure equitable access to these funds across equity-deserving groups, Federal granting agencies must continue to monitor applications to assess that success rates are proportionate to population rates.

If persistent gaps in the access to these funds occur, dedicated funding streams can be created to mitigate these imbalances and support scholars with diverse identities. An important example was Budget 2022's commitment of \$40.9 million over five years to support targeted scholarships and fellowships for Black student researchers.<sup>5</sup>

### **Recommendation 2: Enhance the impact and reach of Canadian research by investing in open access publishing**

As proposed in the 2022 Open Science Dialogues,<sup>6</sup> there should be federal funding support for open access publishing of journal articles and scholarly books in Canada. Open access publishing allows research to be found, read, and shared by anyone in the world with Internet access, facilitating dissemination of research to the public, policymakers, and other researchers.

The Federal government should establish an open access fund to help mitigate the costs researchers incur when publishing open access articles and books. The open access fund must be available to researchers belonging to equity-deserving groups, in all disciplines, and working in French, English and Indigenous languages. Lowering barriers to research will benefit students, fuel innovation and economic growth, and put knowledge in the hands of more people working to solve global challenges. This open exchange of research can help Canada have a thriving knowledge economy across universities, public, and private sectors, while keeping the public informed on important scientific developments.

## **Conclusion**

Scholars in the humanities and social sciences produce important research and make valuable contributions to Canadian society. Investing in scholarships, fellowships, and open access publishing will help scholars in these disciplines, as well as researchers in other disciplines, increase the impact and reach of their work.

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<sup>4</sup> Standing Committee on Science and Research. 2022. [Successes, Challenges and Opportunities for Science in Canada](#).

<sup>5</sup> Government of Canada. 2022. [Budget 2022](#). Chapter 2: A Strong, Growing and Resilient Economy.

<sup>6</sup> Office of the Chief Science Advisor of Canada. 2022. [The Open Science Dialogues: Summary of stakeholders round tables](#).



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### **About the Federation**

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences promotes research and teaching for the advancement of an inclusive, democratic and prosperous society. With a membership now comprising over 160 universities, colleges and scholarly associations, the Federation represents a diverse community of 91,000 researchers and graduate students across Canada. The Federation organizes Canada's largest academic gathering, the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, bringing together more than 8,000 participants each year. For more information about the Federation, visit [www.federationhss.ca](http://www.federationhss.ca).