



November 24, 2022

Standing Committee on Science and Research (SRSR)  
House of Commons  
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Members of the Committee,

Re: Study of research and scientific publication in French

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (the Federation) is pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the study of research and scientific publication in French by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research.

As the national voice of the humanities and social sciences serving a diverse community of 91,000 researchers and graduate students, the Federation actively supports French-language research in all its activities, including the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Canada's largest academic conference, and the Prix d'auteurs pour l'édition savante, which has contributed to the publication of 288 scholarly books in French since 2010.

### **The Federation's position on bilingualism**

As part of our contribution to the 2022 Cross-Canada Official Languages Consultations, the Federation highlighted the need for the government to address the specific challenges faced by francophone researchers.

Access to master's and doctoral programs in French is essential so that francophones can continue their education in their language up to the highest levels.

Francophone graduate students and post-doctoral fellows are also essential to teams interested in conducting research in French in universities across Canada.

The government must support the next generation of French-language research: the contributions of these individuals are essential to ensuring a better understanding of the issues facing francophone communities and a better future for Canada.

According to the latest Acfas report, *Portrait et défis de la recherche en français en contexte minoritaire au Canada*, research in French is in decline. Among the most compelling examples, this report indicates that French-language journals represent only 8% of the scholarly journals created since the 1960s in Canada and that the proportion of French-language publications is steadily decreasing.



The report also reveals that researchers in francophone minority communities receive very little support from master's and doctoral students to conduct their research in French, given the limited choice of graduate programs offered in French at their institutions.

Many French-speaking students living outside of Quebec find themselves forced to either move to continue their education in French at large universities offering a wider choice of graduate programs, or to pursue a degree in English close to home. This accentuates the dominance of English in the development of their scientific careers and reduces the likelihood that their research topics will meet the needs of the francophone community. Increased funding would reduce these inequalities and provide greater support for French-language research in Canada and, in particular, in contexts where the vitality of the French language is weakened.

At a recent webinar organized jointly by the Federation and Acfas, entitled "[Publish in English or perish: Challenges and opportunities of French-language research in Canada](#),"<sup>1</sup> experts told us that in order to support French-language research, financial assistance as well as greater recognition of French-language research is needed. We propose the following recommendations to help address these challenges.

### **The Federation's recommendations**

In this context, the Federation wishes to make two key recommendations: the first is to increase financial support for graduate studies and postdoctoral fellowships; the second is to invest in open access publishing in French.

#### **1. Increase financial support for graduate studies and postdoctoral fellowships**

First, we applaud the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Science and Research to increase the number of graduate and post-doctoral fellowships, as well as to increase their value by 25% and index them to the consumer price index. However, according to our calculations, only a 48% increase in the amount of these scholarships would take into account inflation over the past two decades and ensure that they retain their value.

Overall, we need to think about issues of equity in the training of the next generation of francophone researchers. As recommended by Acfas, it is important to ensure that the success rates of funding applications are equivalent for French- and English-speaking researchers.<sup>2</sup> Where inequalities persist, additional funding or programs (e.g., programs for research on francophone communities, support for relocation to study in French) can help balance them out.

---

<sup>1</sup> Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences and Acfas. 2022. [Publish in English or perish: Challenges and opportunities of French-language research in Canada](#).

<sup>2</sup> Acfas. 2021. [Rapport sommaire : Portrait et défis de la recherche en français en contexte minoritaire au Canada](#). Page 23.



## 2. Investing in open access publishing in French

Our second recommendation encourages the federal government to support open access publishing in French so that research can be discovered, read and shared by anyone in the world with Internet access.

Currently, there are a limited number of channels for disseminating open access research. This creates significant barriers to pursuing a career in research, particularly for francophones, such as limiting how far knowledge can spread, and undervaluing their achievements by research evaluation systems and university promotion committees.

We therefore propose the creation of an open access fund to mitigate the costs of publishing open access books and articles and to increase their reach. This fund would include funding for the simultaneous open access publication of research in both official languages to cover a wider audience. This will: 1) support a vibrant community of francophone researchers; 2) increase the dissemination of research conducted in French; and 3) allow for interaction with a broader English-speaking audience.

Researchers in the humanities and social sciences produce essential research in French. Investing in talent development and open science will help researchers in these disciplines, as well as others, to increase their impact and the reach of their work for the benefit of our community and society at large.

Kind regards,

**Gabriel Miller**

President and Chief Executive Officer  
Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences