



August 31, 2022

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor  
Minister of Official Languages  
Canadian Heritage  
Official Languages Branch  
15 Eddy Street, 7th floor  
Gatineau, Québec K1A 0M5  
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Re: 2022 Cross-Canada Official Languages Consultations

Dear Minister,

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (the Federation) welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the 2022 Cross-Canada Official Languages Consultations by submitting our recommendations for supporting French-language research in Canada.

As the national voice for the humanities and social sciences, the Federation's mission is to help researchers create and disseminate knowledge that will benefit all Canadians. Serving a diverse community of 91,000 researchers and graduate students, we actively support French-language research across our activities, including at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Canada's largest academic conference, and through our Awards to Scholarly Publication Program, which since 2010 has helped publish 288 scholarly books in French.

Supporting French-language research is essential to building the vibrant, sustainable research ecosystem that Canada needs. Federal policies should address the distinct challenges facing French-language researchers within a broader framework for supporting Canadian research. We recommend that the federal government:

- Contribute to talent development by increasing support for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows; and
- Expand the reach of French-language research by investing in open science and making Canadian research more accessible to researchers, policymakers, and the public.

In addition to these recommendations, we urge the government to consult and support [Portrait and Challenges of Research in French in the Minority Context in Canada](#), an important Acfas report which we proudly endorse.

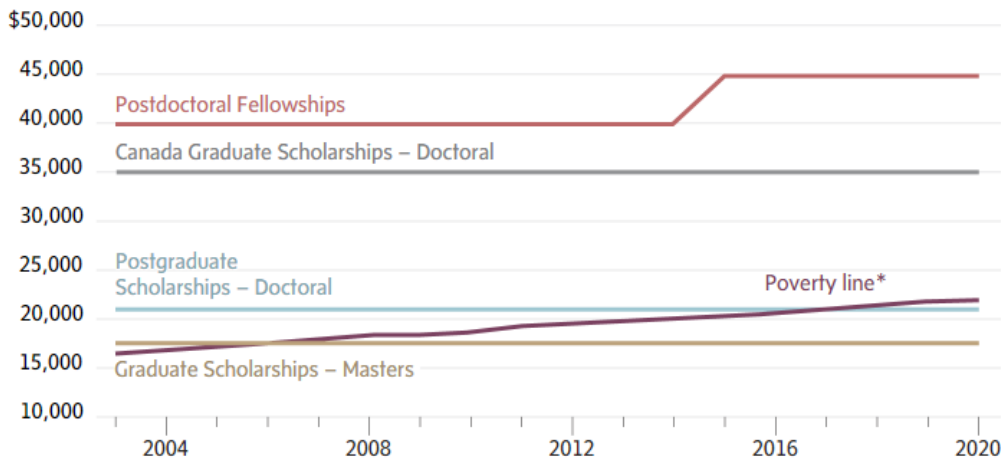
#### **Increase support for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows**

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 rising costs are devaluing them to the point where a recipients' income is below the poverty line.



### FLATLINED

Federal scholarship amounts for Canadian graduate students in the sciences have not changed since 2003. Amounts for postdoctoral researchers saw one increase in 2015.



\*Based on single individual living in urban area with population greater than 500,000.

SOURCE: NATURAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING RESEARCH COUNCIL, STATISTICS CANADA

Graph shared in Semeniuk, I. (2022 May 12). [Prominent researchers urge Ottawa to increase top science scholarships above poverty line](#). *The Globe and Mail*.

Graduate scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships must keep up with the cost of living. The Federal government should increase the amount of these awards by 48% to account for inflation during the past two decades, and index these awards to the consumer price index to ensure they retain their value. Increasing the amounts of these awards will support Canada's ability to attract, develop and support French-language talent and French research excellence.

Investing early in a scholar's career through graduate and postdoctoral funding produces research, and provides important training and experience for scholars to build upon throughout their careers. As Acfas has recommended, Tri-Council agencies should ensure that funding opportunities for French research are proportionate to Canada's Francophone population, and that French and English applications have equivalent success rates.

### Invest in French-language open science

As part of the [Roadmap for Open Science](#) for federally-funded research in Canada, there must be dedicated support for French-language research, including journal articles and scholarly books. This must include support for open access publishing to enable 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. This fund should include dedicated funding for open access publishing of French-language research, as well as the translation of open access research



into French. 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.

In committing to an open science strategy, the federal government must also monitor the publication of open science in the French language. Similar to recommendations for Tri-Council agency funding, the rate of French-language open science publications should reflect the proportion of Francophones in Canada.

Investing in open access publishing will increase the dissemination of French-language research within Canada and globally, and contribute to a vibrant French-language research community for a digital age.

Scholars in the humanities and social sciences produce essential French-language research. Investing in talent development and open science will help scholars in these disciplines, as well as others, increase the impact and reach of their work.

Yours sincerely,

**Gabriel Miller**  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences