



Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2026 Federal Budget

Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences



Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Strengthen Federal research funding by ensuring both core Tri-Agency funding and new mission-driven research investments are proportionally allocated, with at least one-third dedicated to humanities and social science research.
 - Dedicate support for Indigenous research in all mission-driven and national priority funding decisions.
 - Dedicate a proportion of all funding for French-language research within each federal funding program to bolster French-language applications and awards.
- **Recommendation 2:** Increase investment in infrastructure to address existing gaps in support for the humanities and social sciences through targeted measures to ensure infrastructure serves all disciplines equitably.
 - Mobilize and bolster Canada's Digital Research Infrastructure and invest in Indigenous data sovereignty and bolster protections within existing systems.
 - Sustain and expand existing open access initiatives, like Érudit, to a national multilingual platform that places French on equal footing with English.
 - Establish a pan-Canadian Knowledge Mobilization Program through existing organizations such as Research Impact Canada.
 - Maintain funding for the Department of Canadian Heritage and Statistics Canada, given their essential role in maintaining core infrastructure that supports research, knowledge mobilization, and access to knowledge in Canada.



Introduction

Complex challenges such as the rapid advancement of AI, declining public trust in democratic institutions, and geopolitical instability are profoundly impacting Canadians. Canada needs a strong research ecosystem that powers the necessary knowledge, skills, and talent to provide innovative and long-lasting solutions.

Humanities and social sciences (HSS) researchers and graduates centre their work in community-based approaches, addressing the human dimension of each societal challenge we face. From history and political science, to law and linguistics, these fields drive meaningful, adaptive, and sustainable solutions that work for and with communities, people, institutions and systems.¹

The Government of Canada must build a balanced and future-ready research ecosystem through investments in the humanities and social sciences, and the essential infrastructure that allows these disciplines to contribute effectively.

Our Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Strengthen Federal research funding by ensuring both core Tri-Agency funding and new mission-driven research investments are proportionally allocated, with at least 1/3rd dedicated to humanities and social science research

By limiting budgetary reductions to the federal granting councils, the 2025 Federal Budget signaled a strong commitment to maintaining Canada's world-class research ecosystem. A balanced and future-ready research ecosystem depends on equitable investment across all disciplines. Investments in mission-driven and priority-focused research initiatives must complement core Tri-Agency funding. The Federation recommends that growth in both investigator-led and mission-driven research funding be allocated proportionally, with at least one-third dedicated to the humanities and social sciences.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) supports the vital work undertaken by humanities and social science scholars to inform policy, strengthen communities, and deliver innovative solutions to Canada's most pressing challenges, including building trust in critical areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and democracy. Yet, SSHRC continues to receive less than its proportional share of federal research investments. Addressing this imbalance is essential to sustaining and scaling the impact of these disciplines.

The humanities and social sciences are central to Canada's talent pipeline, accounting for more than half of post-secondary enrollments and a significant proportion of professional leaders.² As employers increasingly prioritize creative and adaptive workers, the demand for the critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills taught by the HSS continues to grow. Proportional support through

¹ See, for example, the Canadian Association for Food Studies' [New Grocery Movement](#), which centres communities to provide access to diverse food systems.

² Statistics Canada. [Table 37-10-0275-02 Postsecondary enrolments, by detailed field of study](#); and [Inside Higher Ed Social Sciences Produce Leaders](#).



core Tri-Agency funding will sustain this training capacity and equip the next generation of Canadian talent.

The HSS Drive Canada's Critical Missions

Mission-driven research cannot succeed without strong humanities and social sciences participation. This approach to research aims to solve the most pressing challenges facing Canada.³ For example, Le centre pour l'étude de la citoyenneté démocratique brings together researchers across Quebec universities to investigate how citizens participate in civic life and how institutions can better represent and respond to public needs.⁴

Societal and cultural aspects of all major national priorities must not be overlooked. As the Government of Canada looks toward greater coordination of the federal research system through a capstone organization, it is essential that new mission-driven funding calls and priority-setting reflect the full range of research disciplines and expertise across Canada.

Providing equitable pathways for humanities and social sciences participation ensures that mission-driven research can fully harness the cultural, linguistic, and regional diversity that drives innovative, whole-of-society solutions to improve the lives of all Canadians.⁵

Dedicate support for Indigenous research in mission-driven and national priority initiatives

Indigenous research priorities inform mission-driven investments and are essential to driving innovation and science. The Government of Canada's commitments to Truth and Reconciliation requires that Indigenous research and science be centralized in all mission-driven funding priorities.

Dedicated mechanisms to support funding for Indigenous research in all mission-driven and national priority funded projects must be developed. Indigenous leadership must be established in decision-making processes around these investments. Without meaningful inclusion and consultation with Indigenous communities and leadership, Canada's mission-driven initiatives and research future cannot be sustained.

Dedicate a proportion of all funding for research conducted and disseminated in French

Finally, to support a strong, world-class research ecosystem, a dedicated proportion of all federal funding opportunities, including those under mission-driven initiatives, must be for French language research. With existing systemic barriers to knowledge dissemination in French, Francophone researchers are often compelled to conduct research in English, rather than in French, due to the disproportionate level of visibility and access in English.

Increasing investments for French-language research, as the recently released report "Research in French and Substantive Equality: An Opportunity" suggests, will help reduce systemic barriers, bolster francophone research and knowledge dissemination, encourage greater participation of Francophone

³ See SSHRC's [Insight on Canadian Priorities](#).

⁴ See [CSDC Website](#)

⁵ SSHRC's "[Imaging Canada's Future Fund](#)" mobilizes the HSS in key priority areas, addressing future and emerging societal challenges across all sectors.



scholars across national funding priorities, and ensure research capacity is supported in all regions and institutions in Canada, including within Francophone minority language communities outside Québec.⁶

A research ecosystem that encourages research and dissemination in French fosters diverse research perspectives, and the linguistic duality and vitality that make Canada truly unique. It also positions Canada to expand international research collaborations, including through the Horizon Europe program, in which Canada enhanced its participation in 2024 to solve major societal challenges such as civil security and climate among many others, and French-speaking.⁷

Recommendation 2: Increase investment in infrastructure to address existing gaps in support for the humanities and social sciences through targeted measures to ensure infrastructure serves all disciplines equitably.

Mobilizing Digital Research Infrastructure

Digital research infrastructure provides the strong technical foundations that Canada needs to enable open access and artificial intelligence systems to thrive. While the Government of Canada has committed to bolstering its national digital infrastructure, targeted measures are needed to ensure humanities and social sciences disciplines are fully supported and that research findings from across the research community can be effectively mobilized and scaled. Funding programs and policies on digital research infrastructure must consider the unique challenges and circumstances of humanities and social science research, ensuring that eligibility and funding amounts are not evaluated alongside major STEM or Health infrastructures, which vary greatly from the needs of the HSS.

Our peer jurisdictions including Australia and the European Union have already established dedicated HSS initiatives. The EU's DARIAH directly contributes to the understanding of cultural, economical, social, and political life in Europe, putting it at the forefront of knowledge discovery and positioning Europe as a leader in realizing the deployment of HSS skills in commercial settings. If Canada wishes to position itself as a leader in science and research, the federal government should establish specific HSS initiatives in digital research infrastructure similar to the EU's DARIAH and Australia's HASS and Indigenous Research Data Commons. This infrastructure must also carefully consider Indigenous data sovereignty, strengthening protections under existing systems.

Coordinating National Open Access

A coordinated, national approach to open access is critical to maintaining Canada's global competitiveness and keeping pace with international partners. Open access, which allows anyone to read, download, and use research articles and books, promotes increased visibility, impact, and reach of science and research. To fulfill its open science commitments, the Government of Canada must invest to sustain and expand existing open access initiatives, such as the dissemination platform Érudit, which places French-language research on equal footing with English. A national, bilingual open science strategy should build on these existing infrastructures to pave the way forward for Canadian research to remain accessible, inclusive, and globally connected.

⁶ See [Research in French and Substantive Equality: An Opportunity](#).

⁷ See [About Horizon Europe](#).



Promoting Knowledge Mobilization

Knowledge mobilization is the umbrella term for a range of activities related to the production and use of research results by researchers and knowledge users, which maximizes societal and economic benefits of academic research. Through knowledge mobilization, Canada can accelerate progress on federal priorities and nation-building initiatives through enhanced interdisciplinary collaborations and greater visibility on federally funded projects. A pan-Canadian knowledge mobilization program, based at the national network Research Impact Canada, would build on Canada's existing research strengths and bridge existing gaps between academia, non-profit, and private sectors.

Supporting Research Infrastructure

Funding for the Department of Canadian Heritage and Statistics Canada must be maintained, given their essential role in maintaining core infrastructure that supports research, knowledge mobilization, and access to knowledge in Canada. Humanities and social sciences scholars across the nation rely on robust cultural institutions and public, trusted data centres to generate, preserve, and mobilize knowledge about Canada and what Canadian sovereignty means to diverse communities. Planned funding reductions announced in Budget 2025 to the Department of Canadian Heritage and Statistics Canada will make it more difficult for researchers to undertake and mobilize their research. These institutions house public, primary data sources essential to understanding Canada's peoples, cultures, languages, and histories. Without reliable and timely data access, HSS researchers will face additional barriers.

Conclusion

To advance national priorities Canada needs strong humanities and social sciences research capacity. The HSS build the knowledge, talent, and skills necessary to address the complex challenges we face today, from democratic resilience to public trust in AI. Harnessing these contributions requires sustained investment in research funding, and in the infrastructure and networks that allow research to be accessed, mobilized, and translated into impact for policy, communities, and society. French-language and reconciliation commitments must be centred across these investments.

To bolster Canadian sovereignty and secure a prosperous future, the Government of Canada must ensure proportional allocation of research funds and must invest in scaling the infrastructure necessary to harness the downstream impacts of the HSS.



About the Federation

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences is a national member organization that promotes scholarship and leadership in the humanities and social sciences (HSS) through advocacy, capacity-building, and knowledge exchange. It represents over 160 member organizations including universities, colleges, and scholarly associations, and a community of nearly 90,000 researchers and graduate students across Canada.

The Federation plays a unique and strategic role in Canada's research ecosystem by:

- Gathering HSS expertise from universities, colleges, and community-based organizations across the country
- Providing a national platform to communicate with and learn directly from HSS scholars through annual events like Congress, Summits, consultations, and targeted initiatives
- Leading ecosystem-wide change on key issues such as open access, graduate education, and equity
- Coordinating national advocacy to elevate the role of HSS in addressing Canada's social, cultural, economic, and democratic challenges

For more information about the Federation, visit www.federationhss.ca.