

NSCAD University
2023–2028

STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN

Advancing Creative Research and Social Impact

Introduction

Inspired by our rich history, anchored in the vibrant present, and driven by an unwavering commitment to guiding transformative impact, NSCAD University stands as an immersive, dynamic, and nurturing creative and intellectual hub. Within this academic community, our members stand as guiding lights, revealing the path for those eager to comprehend the world as it exists today and shape the possibilities of what it can become.

NSCAD University is an institution on the cusp of immense change. NSCAD fosters a dynamic and inclusive learning ecosystem, prioritizing student empowerment and actively involving our dedicated faculty and staff. We are committed to exploring the intricacies of our global landscape, pushing boundaries of conventional thought, and providing opportunities to build sustainable livelihoods through art, media, craft, and design. Our vision embraces innovation, creativity, and social transformation.

Although it is challenging to encapsulate the entirety of NSCAD University's creative endeavors, research initiatives, scholarly pursuits, and innovative contributions in a single document, the Strategic Research Plan endeavors to showcase key areas of research prowess. Continuing over 130 years of internationally recognized art and design education, NSCAD University's Strategic Research Plan (SRP) aligns with the institution's Academic Plan, emphasizing the central role of knowledge creation, mobilization, and research. The SRP outlines ambitious goals over the next five years, focusing on increasing research capacity, exploring innovative interdisciplinary initiatives, and promoting an inclusive understanding of research. It outlines specific research domains earmarked for the deployment of Canada Research Chairs and/or research infrastructure support. As NSCAD University seeks to further enhance its research infrastructure, the plan sets the direction for strategic development and growth, championing individual progress and collaborative engagement that emphasizes institutional cooperation, and outlining metrics for assessing success.

Context

At NSCAD University, research is viewed as an inherently generative process rooted in intellectual and artistic inquiry. The institution's SRP reflects a commitment to promoting and supporting nationally and internationally significant research and creative production. NSCAD's research philosophy revolves around seeking out and circling back, fostering an environment where faculty and students engage in continuous exploration and innovation. NSCAD's commitment to research is expanding to include a broader societal perspective. Emphasizing the core role of knowledge generated through, research and by addressing societal challenges, we aim to have positive impact in a changing world. We go beyond academic boundaries, seeking to enhance teaching, address major global issues like climate change and social injustice, and support the growth of the creative sector and community while fostering artistic excellence.

The Strategic Research goals for 2023–2028 focus on increasing the global impact and recognition of NSCAD's research, with six themes driving leadership:

1. Creating New Forms of Knowledge
2. Art and Social Change
3. Critical, Visual, and Cultural Literacies
4. Sustainability, Adaptability, and Regeneration
5. Material Process and Idea Exploration
6. Pedagogy in Art and Design Education

NSCAD supports interdisciplinary collaboration through research centres, institutes, networks, and clusters, seeking Canada Research Chairs to complement its priorities. The Strategic Research Plan outlines ambitions that align with the central aim of being a university governed by excellence and social purpose, collectively emphasizing the transformative power of research and creative practice in the realm of art and design education. The commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, global impact, and societal change underscores the shared mission to push the boundaries of knowledge and contribute to a better, more just world.

NSCAD University is actively pursuing funding for initiatives that enhance our research culture. We prioritize providing comprehensive support to graduate students, ensuring they receive the necessary resources at every stage of their academic career. Our aim is to cultivate a culture that not only values core subject areas but also encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, sparking innovative ways of thinking. By fostering informal networks of collaboration, we intend to attract more researchers to our community and strategically expand our research disciplines.

To further strengthen our interdisciplinary context, NSCAD University is venturing to share creative and intellectual synergies with our community and beyond. This expansion not only diversifies our epistemic landscape but also supports creative research across disciplines. Drawing inspiration from NSCAD University's original approach, we recognize the transformative power of research in art, design, craft, and media practice. Like our Canadian institutional counterparts, we believe in the autonomy of our faculty, allowing them to pursue research interests within the framework of academic freedom. We are committed to community engagement, especially with Indigenous communities, respecting their sovereignty and from this stance incorporating the appropriate protocols and processes in research.

NSCAD University is building on a rich tradition of artistic exploration and intellectual inquiry. By fostering a culture that values collaboration, embraces diversity, and actively contributes to societal impact, we aim to propel our community to the forefront of innovative and meaningful research.

Research Theme 1

Creating New Forms of Knowledge

Research-creation is an ecology of practices in which making, and inquiry intersect. SSHRC defines research-creation as:

“An approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms).”

For NSCAD researchers, this creative and participatory approach, while acknowledging the limitations of normative inquiry, ventures into territories where conventional modes of experimentation fail to capture the full range of potential insights. Central to its essence is the generation of knowledge that transcends social scientific research paradigms, introducing experimental and embodied forms of understanding. At its core, research-creation operates as a dynamic force, proposing strategies for creative practices that account for the emergence of these unconventional forms of knowledge. By emphasizing the active constitution of creative processes over the fixation on a final object, research-creation becomes most compelling when tapping into potential that exceeds traditional disciplinary methods and institutional structures, including considerations of creative capital.

Acknowledging the inherently experimental nature of research-creation, NSCAD emphasizes the establishment of new knowledge by generating new experiences. This process challenges predetermined methodologies and values, as the forms of knowledge and experience it introduces may extend beyond pre-given frameworks. Ultimately, research-creation can reimagine what is imperative in pedagogy, practice, knowledge production and creative experimentation, offering concrete intersections that invite a transformative engagement with these fundamental questions.

Research Theme 2

Art and Social Change

Art and social change are intertwined forces that often coalesce to shape and reflect the evolving dynamics of societies. Art serves as a powerful medium through which individuals and communities express their perspectives, challenge norms, and advocate for transformative ideas. Whether through fine arts, curatorial practices, media arts, or performance, researchers can provoke thought, evoke emotions, and inspire action. By addressing social issues, fostering empathy, and promoting dialogue, art has the potential to catalyze positive societal transformations, thereby challenging inequities, fostering inclusivity, promoting health and contributing to the evolution of cultural and political landscapes. The forthcoming Canada Research Chair (CRC) Tier 2 in Transatlantic Black Diasporic Art and Community Engagement is an example of the opportunities available at NSCAD to activate internal and external discourse while engaging community partners and students alike. In essence, the intersection of art and social change illustrates the capacity of creative expression to spark awareness, ignite conversations, and drive meaningful progress.

The Extended Studies NSCAD Art Factory and the forthcoming Institute for Art, Community, and Transdisciplinary Studies (InACTS) are two additional campus units that will continue to prioritize the intersection of art and social change by removing barriers to accessing specialized programming for historically marginalized groups – newcomers, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities, and those living with mental illness – that have been historically excluded from institutional structures. The NSCAD Art Factory works with community partner organizations and NSCAD students to co-create specialized arts-based programming for community members, using the

resources, equipment and expertise available at NSCAD. The goal of the Art Factory program is to enhance art education opportunities for community members while providing valuable cultural sector employment opportunities and facilitation training for NSCAD students. The Institute for Art, Community, and Transdisciplinary Studies (InACTS) will be the site that houses the Canada Research Chair (Tier 2) in Art Education, Belonging, and Social Change. As a transdisciplinary entity InACTS takes an approach to art and art education that transcends conventional disciplinary boundaries and draws from a range of ontological, epistemological, and theoretical perspectives with various practical applications. Knowledge and skills are shared between members (researchers, participants, community stakeholders) in a way that allows them to work collaboratively for the ultimate benefit of a given participant group or population.

Acknowledging that participatory research is not exclusively existing on campus, examples such as the Community Mobile Media Lab (CMML) support community engagement off-site. The CMML is a purpose-designed mobile media production hub that will facilitate participatory research and mentorship in film and media arts throughout Mi'kma'ki. The lab will be utilized for the numerous community-based research projects currently being conducted by our faculty, which prioritize collaborative methodologies of co-creation and collective authorship. It will create innovative means of disseminating research to our immediate community, while also permitting alternative forms of outreach and education, which will further advance our equity, diversity and inclusion priorities by providing informal, community-based education with under-represented communities.

Research Theme 3

Practices of Critical Decolonization

Research in critical, visual, and cultural literacies at NSCAD University involves an exploration of, and an investigation into the intersection of critical thinking, visual communication, and cultural understanding in the context of creative practices.

NSCAD is continuing its commitment to addressing the recommendations outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Our goals are aligning with the national discourse on transformative change towards understanding, commemorating, and reconciling historical injustices. Consequently, our SRP aims to actively contribute to the generation of knowledge related to Indigenous experiences, histories, and epistemologies. This includes fostering collaborations at the regional, national, and international levels between our researchers and Indigenous artists, curators, scholars, and community members.

NSCAD assumes a pivotal role in enhancing the visibility of Indigenous peoples and their artistic practices in the Atlantic region during this crucial period of reconciliation. The research conducted in Indigenous Studies significantly contributes to shaping cultural policy in Canada. The work being conducted by Dr. Leah Decter, the Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Creative Technologies and Community Engagement, through the Centre for Inter-Media Arts and Decolonial Expression (CIMADE) supports community engagement, experiential pedagogy, intermedia research-creation, arts-based activism, and converging streams of interdisciplinary scholarship. Through innovation in inter-media arts, it seeks to provide opportunities for diverse communities, artists, scholars, and students to investigate, engage, and experiment with decolonial practices. Sustained partnerships with Indigenous communities and collaborations with local and national universities remain integral to our mission. This ensures the creation of opportunities for Indigenous researchers and students. Research serves as a crucial step towards formulating an inclusive curriculum that acknowledges the unique contributions of Indigenous art and culture to a diverse Canadian identity.

The urgency to address the concerns of African Nova Scotian communities has led to the revitalized proposal for the Tier 2 CRC in Transatlantic Black Diasporic Art and Community Engagement. The anticipated impact of this Chair is profound, emphasizing the reinforcement of research in various diverse, core, and often overlooked areas

within the university. Opportunities for potential collaborations abound at the provincial government and institutional levels, particularly as Nova Scotia boasts a dedicated Ministry of African Nova Scotian Affairs. Within the broader community, organizations such as The Black Cultural Centre, Black Educators Association, Nova Scotia Museum, Shelburne County Museum, NS Archives, and Halifax Regional Centre for Education are eager to consolidate efforts and infrastructure to bring about meaningful social change.

Research Theme 4

Sustainability, Adaptability, and Regeneration

Across various disciplines, a central theme that unites the research interests of many NSCAD faculty members is sustainability. In response to the persistent threat of environmental degradation, faculty members at NSCAD are actively exploring novel materials, methods, and strategies. Their goal is to alleviate the environmental burden and enhance the long-term resilience of most-affected populations. NSCAD's leadership in modeling economic sustainability within the cultural sector encompasses studies in professional practices in the arts, design management, and a diverse array of experiential learning opportunities.

NSCAD's sustainability approach recognizes the interconnectedness of social and natural environments, encompassing ecological, economic, and cultural forces. In the realms of craft, Media, fine arts and design, NSCAD embraces urban ecology, examining the transformation of all environments and spaces through conscious objects.

NSCAD has positioned itself at the forefront of a transformative movement, weaving sustainability, adaptability, and regeneration into the very fabric of its research endeavours. The institution's overarching goal of sustainability extends beyond environmental concerns; it encompasses a holistic approach that integrates social, ecological, economic, and human dimensions. NSCAD acknowledges that by preserving knowledge, traditions, and practices that are collectively held and conveyed within our community, it can facilitate the way people perceive the world, interact with each other, and interpret their surroundings. This requires an innovative, interdisciplinary perspective that emphasizes addressing issues of equity, representation, and accessibility.

Adaptability recognizes the dynamic nature of our world. In a rapidly changing environment, designers and artists explore how their creations can evolve alongside societal shifts, technological advancements, and unforeseen challenges. Faculty members delve into the intersections of design and technology, anticipating future needs and researching solutions that can gracefully adapt to the ever-evolving landscape. Regeneration emerges as a crucial element in NSCAD's future research endeavours. Artists and designers engage with the concept of regeneration by breathing new life into discarded materials, revitalizing urban spaces, and exploring innovative ways to repurpose resources. The goal is not only to create aesthetically pleasing works but to contribute to the renewal of ecosystems and communities, fostering a sense of responsibility and interconnectedness.

Research Theme 5

Material Process and Idea Exploration

Material practice, exploration and experimentation in the studio play a pivotal role in shaping the future of art and design, particularly within the context of a university research environment. This approach is not just about the physical materials used in artistic creations, but also extends to a broader, multi-disciplinary perspective that transcends traditional boundaries and encourages collaboration across various fields.

The first key aspect at NSCAD is the promotion of a wholly interdisciplinary approach to art and design. This involves breaking down silos and fostering collaboration between diverse disciplines such as art, design, science, medicine, and technology. The goal is to anticipate and address the future needs, desires, and challenges that the 21st century presents. This approach requires taking risks and blurring the boundaries between different areas of expertise. By integrating social, scientific, medical, political, environmental, ecological, and economic inquiry, faculty and students engage in multi-disciplinary practices to inform future design scenarios, material propositions, and material practice-based research-led speculations. Materiality serves as the starting point for the creative process, emphasizing tangible outcomes and sensory embodied experiences. This includes the exploration and integration of well-established and new technologies, processes and materials. NSCAD researchers with backgrounds in fashion, product design, print-based arts, sculpture, installation, drawing and painting, craft, digital exploration, and speculative design converge to explore the possibilities inherent in diverse materials. This diversity in disciplines contributes to a rich and dynamic environment where the boundaries of traditional creative practices are pushed, and new ideas emerge through material inquiry.

NSCAD underscores the centrality of material exploration in all art and design practices, a fusion of traditional and new technologies, from stone carving, foundry casting to laser and plasma cutting, vacuum forming, 3D and dye sublimation printing to electron microscopy. The emphasis here is not solely on object making but on a critical mindset expressed through material concerns, providing a critique of the contemporary condition. Public art practices, immaterial practices such as performance art, and collaborative approaches are also integral to this theme.

In the realm of media arts, the impact of digital technologies on vocabulary and methodologies is acknowledged. Research and creation activities delve into digital technologies such as augmented reality, responsive and immersive environments, physical computing, mobile computing, critical gaming, animation, sound design, cinema, artificial intelligence, post-digital outputs and social media. The focus of this work extends beyond technical innovation to include examining and understanding the opportunities, limitations, and cultural impact of these technologies. The integration of digital fabrication methodologies in disciplines like jewellery and metalsmithing, printmaking, sculpture, and ceramics exemplifies the co-evolution of creative application and technology.

NSCAD emphasizes material-led processes that involve repeated explorations and experimentation. These processes supply sources of inspiration, significantly shaping and transforming ideas. This approach acknowledges the importance of iteration and continuous exploration in advancing research. It aligns with the ethos of a university research environment, where pushing the boundaries of knowledge and fostering creativity are essential. The evolution and simultaneous integration of digital media brought back to analog execution, also recognizes the integrative potential of how digital tools link back to and were created from the hand and mind, leading to post-digital forms of expression.

Research Theme 6

Pedagogy in Art and Design Education

The Master of Arts in Art Education (MAED) at NSCAD is poised to position the institution as a significant contributor to local, national, and global discussions on the vital role of the arts in society. The program's three distinct streams—Community Based Practice, Applied Pedagogy in Art Education, and Museum and Curatorial—have been designed to address both national and regional needs by offering inclusive and nuanced perspectives on the societal impact of art.

An illustrative example lies in the courses that strive to foreground the knowledge and creative contributions of Black Nova Scotian and Indigenous communities. The overarching research focus is on generating impactful work that addresses issues such

as creative resilience and resistance for health and well-being, cultural healing and reconciliation, environmental awareness, and more.

Faculty engage with research delving into the intersections of community art education, social justice, and self-determination, particularly in racialized, geographically isolated, and under-resourced communities. Their expertise spans various disciplines, including art and visual studies, childhood studies, education, ethics, sociocultural relations, and geopolitics. This comprehensive knowledge base informs the development of responsive art practices, policies, and curricula.

In 2024, NSCAD will be hosting the national conference of the Canadian Society for Education through Art (CSEA): Prepositioning, Propositioning, and Positioning Art Education. The nomination put forth for the Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Art Education, Belonging, and Social Change in 2023 further enhances the institution's commitment to advancing research excellence in this field.

Objectives

- **Invest in Collaborative Spaces, Technology and Resources:** Cultivate a dynamic and collaborative environment within the future consolidated campus by establishing dedicated spaces that unite artists, designers, and researchers across various disciplines. Simultaneously, invest in technology and resources by allocating existing funds and seeking additional funding to enhance the university's technological infrastructure. This initiative aims to provide cutting-edge tools and equipment, including advanced software, fabrication labs, and other resources, to bolster innovative research-creation practices and elevate the creative and research capabilities of both faculty and students.
- **Establish and Nurture Specialized Research Hubs**
 1. **Institute for Art, Community, and Transdisciplinary Studies (InACTS):** Create a dedicated space for research and community engagement, serving as the nexus for the Canada Research Chair (CRC) Tier 2 in Art Education, Belonging, and Social Change, as well as the Canada Research Chair (CRC) Tier 2 in Transatlantic Black Diasporic Art and Community Engagement. This hub will concentrate on exploring the interconnectedness of art, community dynamics, and societal transformation. It aims to facilitate collaboration among scholars, artists, and activists, providing a platform to share resources and advance collective understanding.
 2. **Interdisciplinary Sustainability Research Hub:** Establish a collaborative research center within NSCAD, uniting faculty and students across diverse disciplines to investigate sustainable practices. Support research endeavors addressing the environmental, economic, cultural, political, and emotional aspects of sustainability. Forge partnerships with external organizations, industry experts, and community stakeholders to amplify the impact and relevance of sustainability research.
 3. **Public Art Research & Creation Hub:** Establish a collaborative research hub that unites faculty and students across diverse disciplines to conduct cutting-edge research and foster the creation of impactful public art. Support interdisciplinary initiatives focused on developing site-responsive artworks that address contemporary societal issues. Facilitate and enhance collaboration among NSCAD faculty and students, community organizations, scholars in the humanities, architects, engineers, health professionals, social scientists, provincial and municipal governments, and business leaders. Encourage the thoughtful creation of public art that not only provokes questions but also proposes novel possibilities, challenges established perspectives, critiques public spaces, and catalyzes changes in attitudes and behaviors, enriching and fulfilling our lives.
 4. **Decolonial Art Research & Creation Hub:** Establish a collaborative research hub that connects faculty, students, artists, curators, activists and community members in developing, activating and sharing decolonial methods for artistic inquiry and production towards equitable social transformation. This hub will support and advance interdisciplinary artistic practices, research-creation and scholarship that mobilize decolonial aesthetics to interrogate settler colonial patterns and beliefs that are entrenched in dominant Canadian society. It will foster collaboration across subjectivities, disciplines, institutions and communities through innovative arts led research and build capacities for non-colonial artistic expression and methods that promote decolonial change in the present and future.
- **Integrate Adaptability, Technological Diversity and Creative Material Exploration:** Position NSCAD as a vanguard in the intersection of design, technology, and art by fostering adaptability and regeneration. Anticipate and address societal and environmental challenges through faculty research, emphasizing adaptability to shifts and technological advancements. Establish a collaborative tech sandbox with cutting-edge tools for interdisciplinary projects, encouraging the integration of technology into artistic processes. Seek funding to support material-led research initiatives, providing resources for unique materials,

experimentation supplies, and equipment. Facilitate short-term residencies for faculty and visiting artists, prioritizing the co-emergence of innovative ideas and expressive forms.

- **Strengthen Research Impact through Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Foster partnerships among the studio-based and art history departments and other disciplines within the social sciences, medical/health sciences and critical humanities, to encourage diverse perspectives and approaches to researching the intersection of art and social change. Establish and enhance NSCAD University's global research impact by fostering cross-cultural collaborations. This includes promoting international alliances with art and design institutions, facilitating shared insights, and gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the global dynamics at play. Additionally, strengthen the university's research culture by encouraging impactful interdisciplinary collaboration, both internally and externally. Emphasize research projects addressing societal issues such as creative resilience, cultural healing, health, and environmental awareness, while promoting knowledge mobilization through publications, conferences, and community engagement.
- **Establish Research-Driven Funding Opportunities:** Review and pursue funding mechanisms specifically tailored to support research-creation projects. This could include grants, fellowships, and awards that prioritize projects demonstrating a strong integration of artistic and research components. Establishing collaborative spaces to activate and extend impact of research institutes within NSCAD and beyond. Encouraging and supporting faculty and students to apply for these opportunities will contribute to the growth and visibility of research-creation within the university community.
- **Foster Collaborative Innovation and Community Impact:** Cultivate external partnerships with organizations, industry collaborators, and research institutions to establish collaborative research-creation projects, leveraging additional resources, expertise, and funding. Simultaneously, encourage faculty and students to actively engage in community-based art projects addressing social issues. Provide resources and funding to support these initiatives, establishing a direct link between the university and local communities. Develop pedagogical approaches that facilitate and enhance community engagement projects, fostering a network of support and collaboration within the broader creative and research communities.
- **Promote Indigenous Knowledge Advancement:** Establish and strengthen collaborations at regional, national, and international levels between NSCAD researchers and Indigenous artists, curators, scholars, and community members. Develop projects that explore the intersectionality of Indigenous art, culture, and critical thinking, contributing to a deeper understanding of Indigenous perspectives. Create opportunities for Indigenous researchers and students by promoting sustained partnerships with Indigenous communities and collaborating with local and national universities.
- **Facilitate Participatory Research Frameworks:** Actively engage African Nova Scotian communities, scholars, and educators in collaborative research initiatives and curriculum development processes to co-create and implement culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies, fostering equity, understanding, and civic repair within the educational landscape of Nova Scotia.
- **Foster Innovative Approaches to Cultural Practices for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Sustainability:** Develop and promote inventive approaches to cultural practices that contribute to environmental sustainability, addressing issues of equity, representation, and accessibility. Support initiatives focused on preserving collective cultural knowledge through place-based practices, public art, and community engagement, incorporating an interdisciplinary perspective that considers social, economic, and cultural dimensions in all research related to

cultural practices and sustainability. Enhance diversity and inclusion within the MAED program by developing and implementing initiatives that ensure curriculum content, faculty representation, and outreach efforts reflect a broad range of perspectives, with a particular emphasis on marginalized communities, such as African Nova Scotian and Indigenous populations.

- **Forge NSCAD's Leadership in Art and Design Education through Interdisciplinary Excellence:** Cultivate and champion interdisciplinary courses and degree programs that seamlessly blend traditional art and design disciplines with cutting-edge research methodologies. By incorporating research-creation principles into the curriculum, the objective is to empower students to navigate novel approaches to problem-solving and thinking, equipping them for careers that demand a fusion of artistic and research skills. Support Faculty to pursue practice-based/artistic research-based PhD Programs. Position NSCAD as a prominent figure in the global realm of art and design education by consistently enhancing and expanding the MAED program. This entails staying at the forefront of emerging trends, pedagogical methods, and technological advancements in the field, and actively participating in pertinent academic and professional dialogues.

CRC and CFI Allocation Plans

NSCAD University allocates three Canada Research Chairs (CRCs) to attract and retain internationally recognized researchers in alignment with its thematic strengths outlined in previous Strategic Research Plans. The Chairs are strategically assigned to areas corresponding to the institution's research focus.

As of 2020, NSCAD has met the CRC-mandated Equity Target of having at least one female CRC. However, committed to the Dimensions Charter and addressing gender disparities in national research chair allocations, NSCAD will enhance recruitment and retention processes. The goal is not only to meet but surpass equity targets by attracting candidates from equity-denied communities.

Equity Targets by 2029:

Indigenous peoples: 4.9%
Persons with disabilities: 7.5%
Racialized minorities: 22%
Women: 50.9%

NSCAD, despite being a smaller institution with fewer than 40 chairs, commits to meeting the targets set for larger institutions.

Allocation of Chairs

Research Theme(s)	Tier, Agency	Time Period
Dr. Leah Decter Creative Technologies and Community Engagement	Tier II (SSHRC)	2020-2025 (renewable)
Art Education, Belonging and Social Change	Tier II (SSHRC)	Vacant (nomination Oct 2023)
Transatlantic Black Diasporic Art and Community Engagement	Tier II (SSHRC)	Vacant (nomination April 2024)

EDI Initiatives for CRC Program at NSCAD University

An inclusive campus fosters diverse perspectives, acknowledging that diversity fuels creativity and innovation. NSCAD's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan (December 2021) solidifies its commitment to inclusive practices. The Strategic Research Plan 2023–28 outlines three key goals:

- Goal 1:** Meet or exceed CRC Program institutional targets for designated groups by December 2024.
- Goal 2:** Demonstrate the value of diversity, inclusion, and equity in managing and promoting the CRC program.
- Goal 3:** Enhance campus inclusivity.

CRC Infrastructure and Deployments

The integration of CFI infrastructure funds with both past and ongoing CRCs enhances NSCAD's technological capabilities. The Vice-President (Academic & Research) plays a crucial role in ensuring that CFI applications align with the university's strategic objectives. The Strategic Research Plan highlights the prioritization of future CRC deployments, specifically aiming to appoint a new chair in Transatlantic Black Diasporic Art and Community Engagement. These deployments are viewed as opportunities to surpass the Equity Targets and commitments mandated by CRC.

Measuring Success with a Holistic Research Ecosystem

In our pursuit of academic excellence and societal impact, NSCAD's Strategic Research Plan is committed to fostering a comprehensive and inclusive research environment. This commitment is evident through a series of interconnected initiatives aimed at cultivating a rich tapestry of research engagement and knowledge mobilization.

To address historical disparities, our institution actively promotes the robust involvement of equity-denied researchers, students, and staff. This initiative is not just a numerical goal but a commitment to creating an environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds have meaningful opportunities to contribute to and benefit from the research enterprise. Recognizing the importance of diverse perspectives, NSCAD is dedicated to amplifying Indigenous research initiatives. Beyond the confines of academia, NSCAD actively collaborates with diverse institutions and community organizations. These partnerships are not only mutually beneficial but also serve as a bridge between academic research and real-world applications, enhancing the societal relevance of our work. Dynamic community engagement activities are woven into the fabric of NSCAD's research ethos. From outreach programs to collaborative projects, these activities reflect our commitment to being an active and responsible member of the communities we serve.

Securing government funding is a key pillar of our strategy, ensuring that NSCAD remains at the forefront of art and design research. These external validations not only provide crucial financial support but also serve as indicators of the relevance and significance of our research endeavors in the wider academic landscape. A cornerstone of our approach is student engagement in funded research initiatives. By involving students in the research process, we not only impart valuable skills and experiences but also contribute to a culture of mentorship and collaboration between faculty and aspiring researchers. Beyond academic achievement, we aim to equip our students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences that will position them as leaders and contributors to society.

NSCAD recognizes that innovation often occurs at the intersections of disciplines and practices. Therefore, fostering cross-faculty collaborations is a deliberate strategy to encourage the exchange of ideas and methodologies, enriching the research landscape. Ensuring the visibility of our research activities on both national and international stages is not merely about recognition; it is a means to share our findings, innovations, and expertise with a broader audience. This visibility contributes to the global conversation on the transformative impacts of art, design, craft and media practices. The elevated visibility of researchers' work within their respective fields and the broader cultural sphere is a natural outcome of the impactful research conducted at NSCAD. This recognition not only enhances the reputation of our institution but also contributes to the advancement of knowledge in diverse fields.

The NSCAD Library is the largest academic resource centre in Atlantic Canada with a mission to support research and creative practice in the fields of fine arts, craft, design, and art history. In addition to hosting and providing reference and circulating access to a collection of more than 30,000 print and media resources (serials, books, DVDs, and exhibition catalogues), the library also provides subscription databases with access to over 10,000 online journals and streaming media resources. Additionally housed within the library is the Visual Resources Collection (VRC), which contains the special collections of NSCAD. In addition to one of the largest collections of printed materials in North America, the VRC is home to an expanding collection of audiovisual and print archives. The Institutional Repository at NSCAD, an open digital space designed to preserve and provide access to digital surrogates of analogue and born-digital archival and scholarly collections, now contains a substantial quantity of digitized and scholarly material. The NSCAD Library, along with its librarians and library technicians, actively participates in various library initiatives, consortiums, and societies at the regional,

national, and international levels. These include the Council of Atlantic University Libraries (CAUL), Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN), the Novanet Consortium of Libraries (which connects all Nova Scotia libraries and makes materials discoverable and accessible throughout the province), and the International Federation of Library Studies.

The NSCAD Library, which has recent experience digitizing and providing access to distinctive archival and scholarly collections in a variety of formats, is in an excellent position to facilitate advanced research. A substantial quantity of scholarly and archival materials, including print, audio/visual, and image collections, have been digitized by the library over the last decade. These materials have been made globally accessible through NSCAD's Institutional Repository, an affiliate of the Islandora Network of Institutional Repositories in Atlantic Canada (CAIRN). The library now routinely describes and digitizes archival and scholarly collections in their distinctive formats; these activities support proposed and existing CRC research areas.

Through exhibitions, public lecture series, artist residencies, curatorial apprenticeships, and student participation and experiential learning, the Anna Leonowens Gallery serves as a central hub for the university's research and creative endeavours. In the past year, the Gallery's responsibilities have grown to become a significant complement to the University's Learning Commons development. The visibility and public importance that the research endeavours bestow upon the university are crucial in stimulating community involvement in creative scholarly inquiry. By emphasizing research and organizing symposium days and current events like Research Hangouts and work-study exchanges, NSCAD intends to improve the integration of practicums, internships, work-study, and exchanges into program offerings. In addition, NSCAD endeavours to provide research experience and increased paid student assistantships. The interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships that arise at NSCAD because of research into emergent and conventional technologies have significant implications for creative and imaginative innovation in the twenty-first century, as well as for the future of Canadian culture.

As a leader in arts and culture production and postsecondary research in this region, NSCAD occupies a crucial and advantageous position. NSCAD contributes significantly to university research in Atlantic Canada on a national and international scale. The variety of approaches utilized in the humanities and visual arts is a fundamental asset of NSCAD University. The dynamic diversity encompasses a wide range of research methodologies, including multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and anti-disciplinary approaches. These approaches are widely utilized in practice-based research within the fields of Art, Craft, and Design, and their impacts are significant in the domains of health, wellness, innovation, and cultural sustainability. Faculty, staff, and the Office of Academic Affairs and Research Services, among other administrative agencies across the university, aid NSCAD in its endeavours to develop research modules through both individual and collaborative projects.

Finally, effective research dissemination and knowledge mobilization are integral components of our strategy. We recognize that the true impact of research is realized when the knowledge generated is shared, applied, and contributes to positive change in society. Therefore, NSCAD is committed to fostering a culture of open communication and engagement with various stakeholders to ensure that our research makes a meaningful and lasting impact.

Research Support

The Research Grants Office at NSCAD supports faculty members to pursue funding opportunities that advance their academic research. The office provides support for applications to TriAgency grants: SSHRC, NSERC, and CIHR, as well as for internal grants like Start-Up Research Grant (SURG), the Research Development Fund Grant (RDFG), and provincial funding through Research Nova Scotia (RNS). NSCAD is guided by the following TriAgency and RNS policies: 1. Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions; 2. Tri-agency Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan; 3. Tri-agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research (2021) 3. Tri-agency Guide on Financial Administration; 5. Research NS Funding Policies.

Planning and Approval

This Strategic Research Plan was written in consultation with a broad cross-section of the NSCAD University community and developed under the leadership of the Senate Research Committee, chaired by the Vice-President (Academic & Research).

Our Strategic Research Plan was approved by Senate and will serve as a guiding document for the Office of Academics and NSCAD University community over the next 5 years.