

NSCAD University
2023–2028

STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN SUMMARY

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.

Objectives

- Invest in Collaborative Spaces, Technology and Resources
- Establish and Nurture Specialized Research Hubs
 1. Institute for Art, Community, and Transdisciplinary Studies (InACTS)
 2. Interdisciplinary Sustainability Research Hub
 3. Public Art Research & Creation Hub
 4. Decolonial Art Research & Creation Hub
- Integrate Adaptability, Technological Diversity and Creative Material Exploration
- Strengthen Research Impact through Interdisciplinary Collaboration
- Establish Research-Driven Funding Opportunities
- Foster Collaborative Innovation and Community Impact
- Promote Indigenous Knowledge Advancement
- Facilitate Participatory Research Frameworks
- Foster Innovative Approaches to Cultural Practices for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Sustainability
- Forge NSCAD's Leadership in Art and Design Education through Interdisciplinary Excellence

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 2023, NSCAD is on target to meet 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

The NSCAD Strategic Research Plan is dedicated to creating an inclusive and comprehensive research environment, focusing on engaging a diversity of perspectives to enhance academic excellence and societal impact. The plan emphasizes the active involvement of equity-denied groups, including a particular focus on Indigenous research, to address historical disparities and ensure meaningful participation across the research spectrum. Collaboration with a variety of institutions and community organizations is central to NSCAD's approach, aiming to bridge academic research with practical applications for greater societal relevance.

A significant aspect of NSCAD's strategy includes securing government funding to support art and design research, highlighting the importance of

student engagement in funded projects to foster a mentorship culture and prepare students as future societal leaders. Cross-faculty collaborations are encouraged to stimulate innovation across disciplines, with a strong emphasis on increasing the visibility of research activities nationally and internationally to contribute to the global dialogue on the impact of art, design, craft, and media practices.

The NSCAD Library, as the largest academic resource center in Atlantic Canada, plays a pivotal role in supporting research and creative practice with an extensive collection of print, media resources, and digital access to journals and media. The library's involvement in digitizing and providing access to archival and scholarly collections enhances research capabilities, making resources globally accessible. The Anna Leonowens Gallery, serving as a hub for research and creative endeavors, further amplifies the university's commitment to community engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Overall, NSCAD's Strategic Research Plan underscores the institution's commitment to fostering a dynamic research environment that not only advances academic knowledge but also makes a tangible impact on society through effective dissemination, knowledge mobilization, and community engagement.

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.