



# Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2019 Budget

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The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

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**Recommendation 1: Improve balance across disciplines in the research funding system**

Continue to increase new research investments dedicated to the humanities and social sciences until the historic underinvestment in these disciplines described by the Federal Science Review has been corrected.

**Recommendation 2: Invest in scholarships and fellowships**

Increase investments in scholarships and fellowships across all academic disciplines by \$140 million per year as recommended in the Fundamental Science Review report. This funding should be used in part to improve support for Indigenous trainees, international trainees and multidisciplinary research.

**Recommendation 3: Extend work-integrated learning opportunities to all post-secondary students**

Extend work-integrated learning opportunities to students in the humanities and social sciences. This should be part of a strategy to expand the eligibility for all federal work-integrated learning programs—including the Student Work-Integrated Learning Program—to students in all fields of study and to not-for-profit organizations.

**Recommendation 4: Improve Indigenous peoples' access to and success in the post-secondary education system**

Improve post-secondary education for Indigenous peoples. Action must be taken to improve access to post-secondary education and guarantee that Indigenous peoples have the support they need to thrive as students and scholars. Specific priorities are to: improve K-12 education in Indigenous communities; increase funding for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program; invest in sustained funding for culturally relevant programs that address barriers to success for Indigenous post-secondary students; support the development of Indigenous scholars through increased funding for Indigenous graduate students and dedicated funding for programs within the granting councils to support relevant and ethical research undertaken by and with Indigenous peoples; and collaborate with Indigenous communities to explore the development of new post-secondary institutions best able to meet their needs.

## Ensuring Canada's competitiveness

Recently the Government of Canada has taken steps to improve our country's long-term competitiveness by reinvesting in our research system. Research funding in Canada had fallen behind that of peer countries due to a prolonged period of underinvestment, as detailed in last year's report by the Fundamental Science Review panel. Budget 2018 helped to reverse this shortfall with the largest multi-year investment in fundamental research of any budget in recent history. This important work must continue if Canada is to compete in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy.

Knowledge and training from the humanities and social sciences play an indispensable role in supporting the prosperity, well-being and competitiveness of Canadians. And yet, underinvestment has hit the humanities and social sciences hardest, as governments all too often excluded these disciplines from new programs and funding opportunities. This mistake must now be corrected. The stakes are high for Canada. The humanities and social sciences make essential contributions to a prosperous, equitable and innovative society, including:

**Essential skill development:** About half of Canada's post-secondary students are enrolled in humanities and social sciences programs. These students go on to see high rates of employment and earnings. Canadian employers regularly emphasize their need for social and cognitive skills,<sup>1</sup> and as new technologies allow for more automation, the demand for these skills is only expected to grow.<sup>2</sup>

**Supporting a cohesive, democratic society:** One of Canada's greatest competitive advantages is its cohesive and democratic society, where people with different backgrounds and beliefs are able to collaborate effectively. In an era of rapid change, knowledge from the humanities and social sciences helps to maintain the systems that make our society work: trusted public institutions, effective public policies, healthy communities and strong cultural connections. Canada needs new thinking that reflects its unique bilingual, federal and multicultural context.

**Ensuring benefits from emerging technology:** Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and gene therapies create new opportunities to improve lives, but they also introduce new risks. To seize the benefits of new technologies while avoiding the dangers, we must improve our social systems alongside our technical ones, which will require new knowledge from the humanities and social sciences.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, [Business Council of Canada \(2018\), "Navigating change: 2018 Business Council Skills Survey."](#)

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, [RBC \(2018\), "Humans Wanted: How Canadian youth can thrive in the age of disruption."](#)

**Advancing equity and inclusion:** One of Canada’s most pressing challenges is ensuring that people from all backgrounds are able to prosper, thrive and contribute to society, free from discrimination. Knowledge from the humanities and social sciences is crucial in helping us understand the forces that contribute to inequality.

Canada must take action to ensure that our research system is well-equipped across all disciplines to address the complex challenges facing Canadians today. To that end, the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences makes the following recommendations.

### **Recommendation 1: Improve the balance of research funding across disciplines**

The Fundamental Science Review, the most important reflection on the Canadian research system in decades, provides a compelling account of how years of underinvestment weakened Canadian research. It also describes how major new funding programs—such as the Canada Excellence Research Chairs and the Canada First Research Excellence Fund—were designed in ways that have led to the exclusion of social science and humanities researchers.

In Budget 2018, the federal government acted on many of the Science Review’s most important recommendations and increased the share of overall research funding directed toward the humanities and social sciences. This is a welcome and important first step to correcting the negative effects of many years of underinvestment. Considering the vital contributions the humanities and social sciences make in skill development and research in an increasingly complex, knowledge-driven and service-oriented society, the federal government must continue in this direction.

**RECOMMENDATION: Continue to increase new research investments dedicated to the humanities and social sciences until the historic underinvestment in these disciplines described by the Federal Science Review has been corrected.**

### **Recommendation 2: Invest in scholarships and fellowships**

Within Canada’s research system, there is a widely acknowledged funding gap for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. These trainees play a fundamental role in advancing research and generating new knowledge across all disciplines, and this experience contributes to their development as some of Canada’s most highly skilled workers, equipping them to play a diverse range of leadership roles in sectors across Canada.

However, funding to support such trainees has stagnated. For instance, the Canada Graduate Scholarships for master’s students have not been adjusted for inflation in 15 years. Furthermore, Canada’s scholarship and fellowship system suffers from gaps in support for Indigenous trainees, international trainees and multidisciplinary research. The Science Review expert panel recognized the vital contributions these trainees make to research in all disciplines and to Canadian society

as a whole and recommended an increased annual investment in scholarships and fellowships across the three research granting councils of \$140 million per year, with increases phased in over four years.<sup>3</sup>

**RECOMMENDATION: Increase investments in scholarships and fellowships across all academic disciplines by \$140 million per year as recommended in the Fundamental Science Review report. This funding should be used in part to improve support for Indigenous trainees, international trainees and multidisciplinary research.**

### **Recommendation 3: Extend work-integrated learning opportunities to all post-secondary students**

Effective skill development in the post-secondary education sector is essential for maintaining Canada's long-term competitiveness, and the changing nature of the global economy requires new skill-development approaches across all fields and sectors. Work-integrated learning—which includes co-ops and internships—has emerged as one of the most promising approaches to help students develop the skills they will need in a rapidly changing economy.

However, the skills needed for the future are becoming increasingly difficult to predict, particularly as new technologies enable increased automation. More and more experts on skill development say what Canadians need are foundational skills that will allow them to thrive in a broad range of future jobs.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, employers themselves say they are looking for people skilled in communication, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and other broad social and cognitive areas.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, work-integrated learning opportunities have developed unevenly across the post-secondary education sector, with large groups of students being excluded from many programs. For instance, the federal Student Work-Integrated Learning Program is only available to people studying the natural sciences, technology, engineering, mathematics and business.

The federal government must act now to extend these learning opportunities to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians studying in the humanities and social sciences. Now is the time to develop a more coordinated and accessible work-integrated learning strategy for Canada. This strategy should ensure that work-integrated learning opportunities are available to all students and a much broader range of employers, including not-for-profit organizations. In the future, every post-secondary student in Canada should graduate having had a high-quality work-integrated learning experience.

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<sup>3</sup> [Investing in Canada's Future: Strengthening the Foundations of Canadian Research](#), (2017), Recommendation 7.1.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, [Advisory Council on Economic Growth \(2017\), "Learning nation: Equipping Canada's workforce with skills for the future."](#)

<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, [Business Council of Canada \(2018\), "Navigating change: 2018 Business Council Skills Survey,"](#)

**RECOMMENDATION:** Extend work-integrated learning opportunities to students in the humanities and social sciences. This should be part of a strategy to expand the eligibility for all federal work-integrated learning programs—including the Student Work-Integrated Learning Program—to students in all fields of study and to not-for-profit organizations.

#### **Recommendation 4: Improve Indigenous peoples’ access to and success in the post-secondary education system**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Final Report clearly states that Canada’s post-secondary education sector has an important responsibility to advance reconciliation. And as noted in the report by the Fundamental Science Review expert panel, “the lead here will be taken overwhelmingly by Indigenous scholars and colleagues in the social sciences and humanities.”<sup>6</sup>

Presently, our most urgent priority is to significantly increase the number of Indigenous post-secondary students and scholars—to reverse the effects of a long history of marginalization in our sector. To achieve this, the federal government must work with Indigenous communities to improve access to post-secondary education and support for Indigenous students.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Improve post-secondary education for Indigenous peoples. Action must be taken to improve access to post-secondary education and guarantee that Indigenous peoples have the support they need to thrive as students and scholars. Specific priorities are to:

- Improve K-12 education in Indigenous communities
- Increase funding for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program
- Invest in sustained funding for culturally relevant programs that address barriers to success for students, including housing, child care and transportation
- Support development of Indigenous scholars through increased funding for Indigenous graduate students and dedicated funding for programs within the granting councils to support relevant and ethical research undertaken by and with Indigenous peoples
- Collaborate with Indigenous communities to explore the development of new post-secondary institutions best able to meet their needs.

#### **Conclusion**

Scholars in the humanities and social sciences make vital contributions that support Canada’s prosperity and competitiveness, including through essential skill development, supporting a democratic society, ensuring benefits from emerging technology, and advancing equity and inclusion. Although the Government of Canada has taken many worthwhile steps in recent years to strengthen the Canadian research system, important work remains to be done. A competitive, prosperous and equitable Canada will depend on continued excellence in research, creativity and innovation.

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<sup>6</sup> [Investing in Canada’s Future: Strengthening the Foundations of Canadian Research](#), (2017), page 20.

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