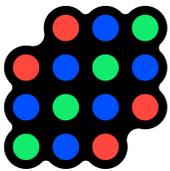


# EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSIVITY ANNUAL REPORT

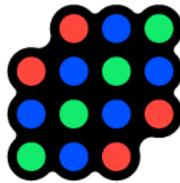


## PREPARED BY

The Canadian Islet Research &  
Training Network (CIRTN-R2FIC)  
EDI Committee

# 2022

**CIRTN**  
Canadian Islet Research  
and Training Network



**R2FIC**  
Réseau de recherche et  
formation sur les îlots du Canada

## Canadian Islet Research & Training Network Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity Annual Report 2022

Content by the 2021/2022 CIRTN-R2FIC EDI Committee: Elizabeth Rideout, Gareth Lim, Tamadher Alghamdi, Cara Ellis, Taylor Morriseau, & Tina Dafoe

Written & designed by Cara Ellis & Tina Dafoe at the University of Alberta

The University of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.

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# CIRTN-R2FIC EDI Committee

The Canadian Islet Research and Training Network (CIRTN-R2FIC) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) Committee was established in April 2021 and is committed to instilling EDI principles and best practices in all facets and activities of the network. The committee meets monthly and is comprised of network principal investigators, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and staff. To access our Terms of Reference, meeting minutes, and a curated list of EDI-related resources, please visit [our webpage](#).

## Committee Members



**Dr. Elizabeth Rideout • Co-Chair**  
Faculty, University of British Columbia



**Dr. Gareth Lim • Co-Chair**  
Faculty, CRCHUM



**Dr. Cara Ellis**  
Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Alberta



**Taylor Morriseau**  
PhD Candidate, University of Manitoba



**Tina Dafoe**  
Research Administrative Coordinator, University of Alberta

## Terms of Reference

The purpose of the CIRTN-R2FIC EDI Committee is to:

- 1** Promote practices that will enhance equity, diversity, and inclusivity, and prevent racism, marginalization, and discrimination.
- 2** Develop and maintain EDI resources and best practices to share across the network so mentors and trainees can create an inclusive, equitable, and diverse environment within their research groups.
- 3** Provide resources and advise on the individual contributions required to implement the CIRTN-R2FIC EDI goals.
- 4** Identify barriers in practices relevant to the goals of CIRTN-R2FIC (e.g. research, teaching, and outreach) and to suggest solutions to these.
- 5** Measure CIRTN-R2FIC demographics as they relate to EDI issues and best practices to address any inequities found.
- 6** Establish and implement a CIRTN-R2FIC EDI strategic plan and the frequency of self-reflection needed to monitor progress, as well as areas for improvement.
- 7** Define the roles of committee membership.
- 8** Liaise and interact with other CIRTN-R2FIC committees (e.g. Leadership Group, Strategic Planning Committee, Mentorship Working Group, Scientific Interest Groups, and Trainee Groups) to implement and integrate EDI principles into CIRTN-R2FIC activities.
- 9** Listen to issues and concerns related to EDI and to advocate for members who raise them with the required confidentiality and sensitivity.

# Self-Identification Survey Results

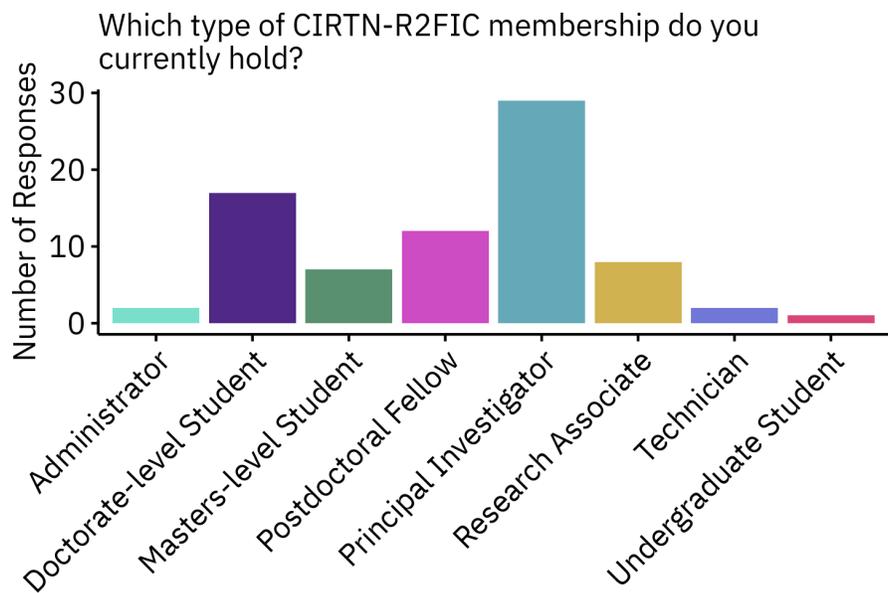
## Background

In the fall of 2021, the CIRTN-R2FIC EDI Committee surveyed the network to gather information on how our members self-identify using a Google Form. We asked nine questions, including two long-form questions; these were adapted from the New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) EDI survey. The survey was offered in English and all answers were anonymous and self-reported. We received 78 responses, which represents a participation rate of 44% based on the current CIRTN-R2FIC mailing list. All respondents answered all of the multiple-choice questions. Thank you to those who took the time to participate!

## Network Membership Status

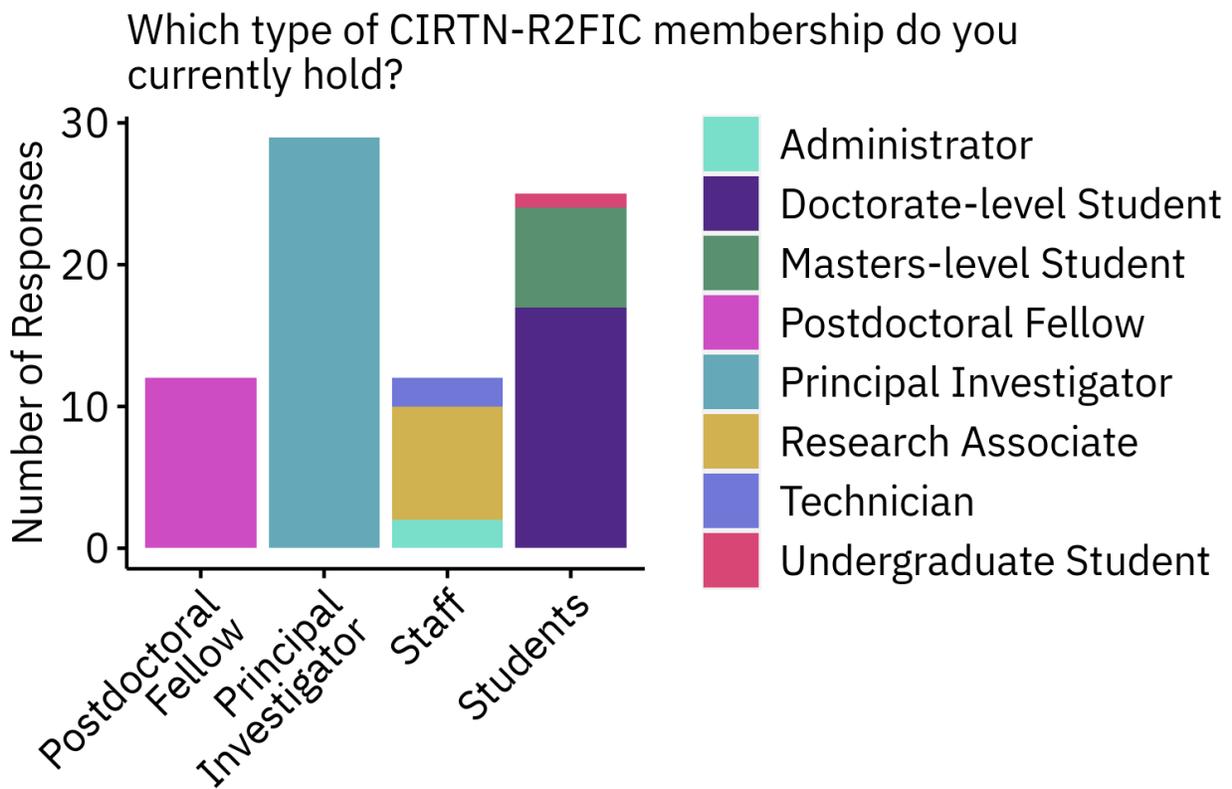
The first question we asked was about the role of the respondents in the CIRTN-R2FIC network. The number of responses were 2 in the Administrator category, 17 for Doctorate-level Student, 7 for Masters-level Student, 12 for Postdoctoral Fellow, 29 for Principal Investigator, 8 for Research Associate, 2

for Technician, and 1 in the Undergraduate Student category. An additional option, “I prefer to not answer,” was not selected by any respondents.



## Network Membership Status (continued)

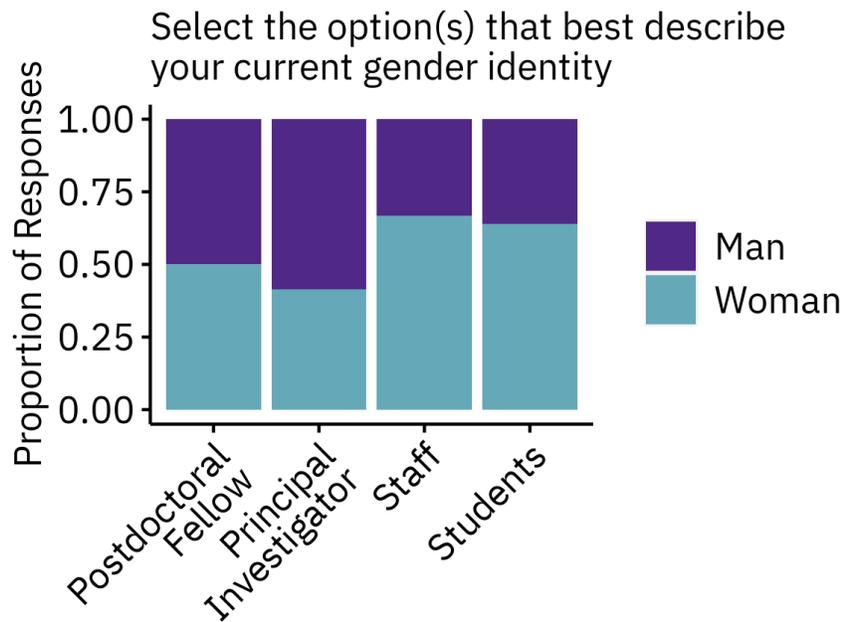
For further analysis, we grouped the membership types into four broader categories. All student trainees (Undergraduate, Masters-level, and Doctorate-level) were combined into the Students category; and Administrators, Research Associates, and Technicians were combined into the Staff category.



Reflecting the composition of the CIRTN-R2FIC network, most respondents were Trainees, with 25 Students and 12 Postdoctoral Fellows responding. The Principal Investigator category remained unchanged, and the new Staff category was comprised of 12 respondents.

## Gender Identity

The second question was about the gender identity of respondents. All respondents selected either man or woman. Additional options that were not selected were gender-fluid, non-binary, trans man, trans woman, Two-Spirit, “I prefer not to answer”, and “I self-identify with an option not listed.”

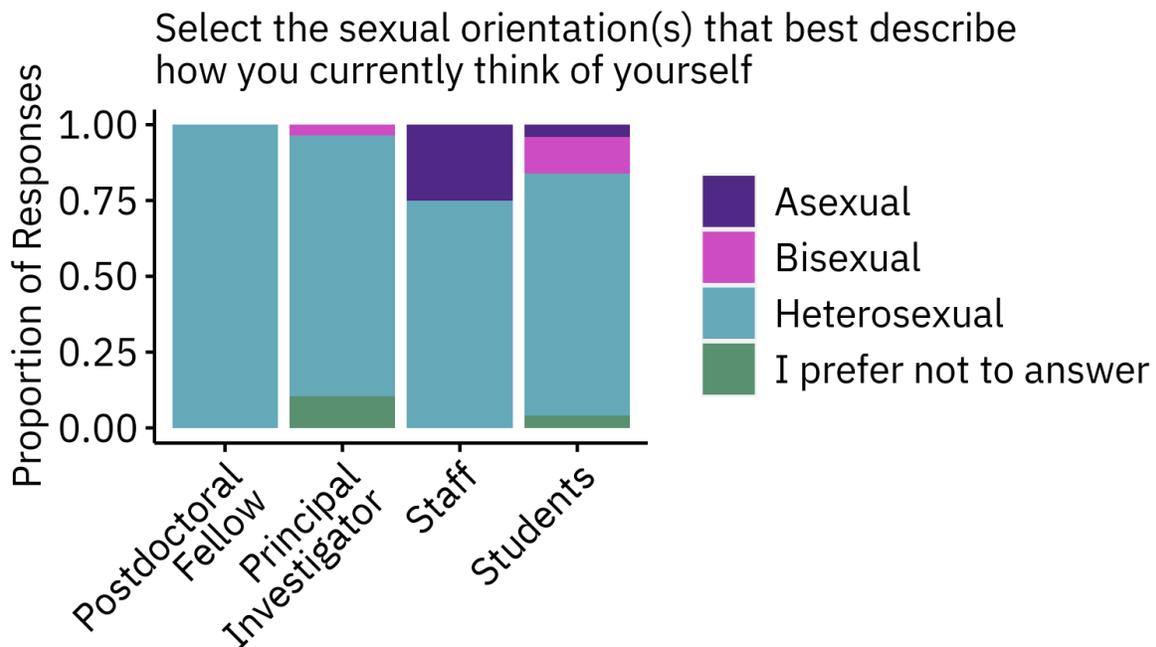


Overall, 54% of respondents identified as women, and 46% identified as men. No respondents identified with more than one option.

More (64%) Students overall identified as women than men (36%), with 11 of 17 PhD students and 3 of 7 Masters students identifying as women. Similarly, more Staff (67%) identified as women, with 5 of 8 Research Associates and both Administrators identifying as women. Half of the responding Postdoctoral Fellows identified as women (6 of 12 respondents). Principal Investigators in the CIRTN-R2FIC network predominantly (59%) identify as men (22/29).

## Sexual Orientation

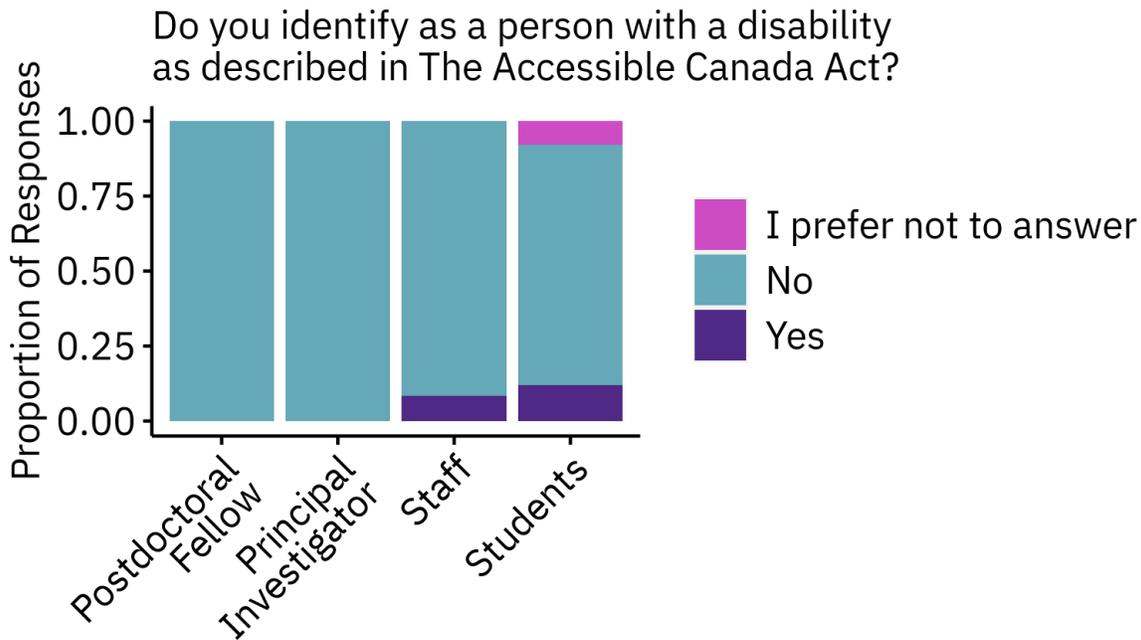
The third question asked respondents about their sexual orientation. Additional options that were not selected were gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer, Two-Spirit, and “I self-identify with an option not listed.” Across all categories, 85% of respondents identified as heterosexual, 5% as asexual, 5% as bisexual, and 5% preferred not to answer.



All respondents in the Postdoctoral Fellow category, 25 of the 29 Principal Investigator respondents, 9 of 12 Staff respondents, and 20 of the 25 Students identified as heterosexual. Of the remaining respondents, 3 Staff and 1 Student identified as asexual; 1 Principal Investigator and 3 Students identified as bisexual.

## Persons with Disabilities

The fourth question asked if respondents identified as a person with a disability. According to The Accessible Canada Act, a disability is defined as “any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.”<sup>1</sup> An additional option not selected by any respondents was, “I self-identify with an option not listed.”

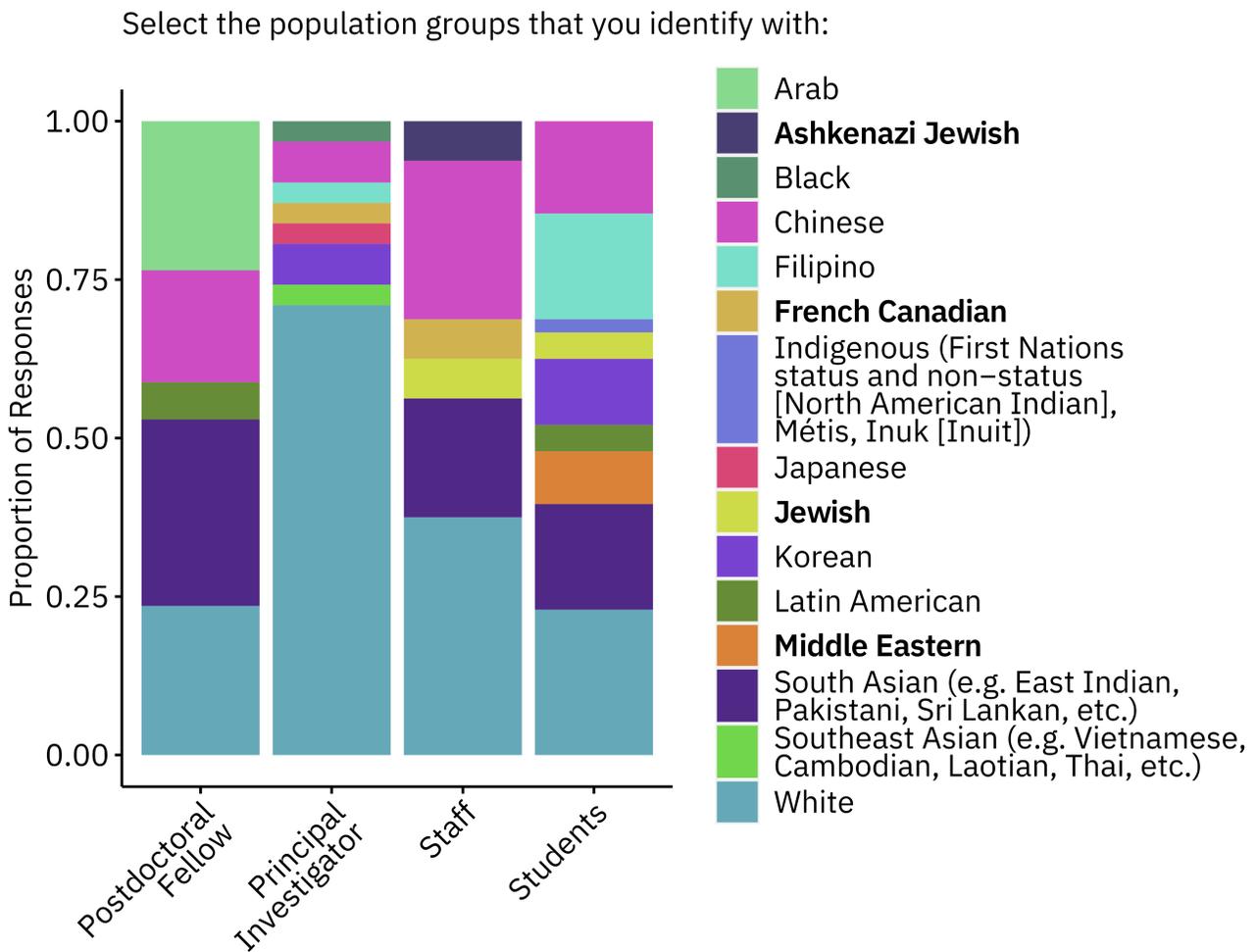


No Postdoctoral Fellows or Principal Investigators identified as persons with disabilities. 3 people in the Students category and 1 in the Staff category identified as persons with disabilities.

<sup>1</sup>Summary of the Accessible Canada Act (<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html>)

## Population Groups

The fifth question asked respondents which population groups they self-identify with. Additional options not selected by any respondents included West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghan, etc.) and “I prefer not to answer.” The population group identities of Ashkenazi Jewish, French Canadian, Jewish, and Middle Eastern were self-reported by respondents who selected "I self-identify with an option not listed." 8% of respondents identified as belonging to a population group that was not listed, either in addition to or instead of the listed options. 8% of respondents identified with multiple categories. The proportion of responses shown reflect the total number of selections, meaning that someone who identified as belonging to both the Arab and Jewish groups would count as two responses.



**Bolded** population groups were self-reported by survey respondents.

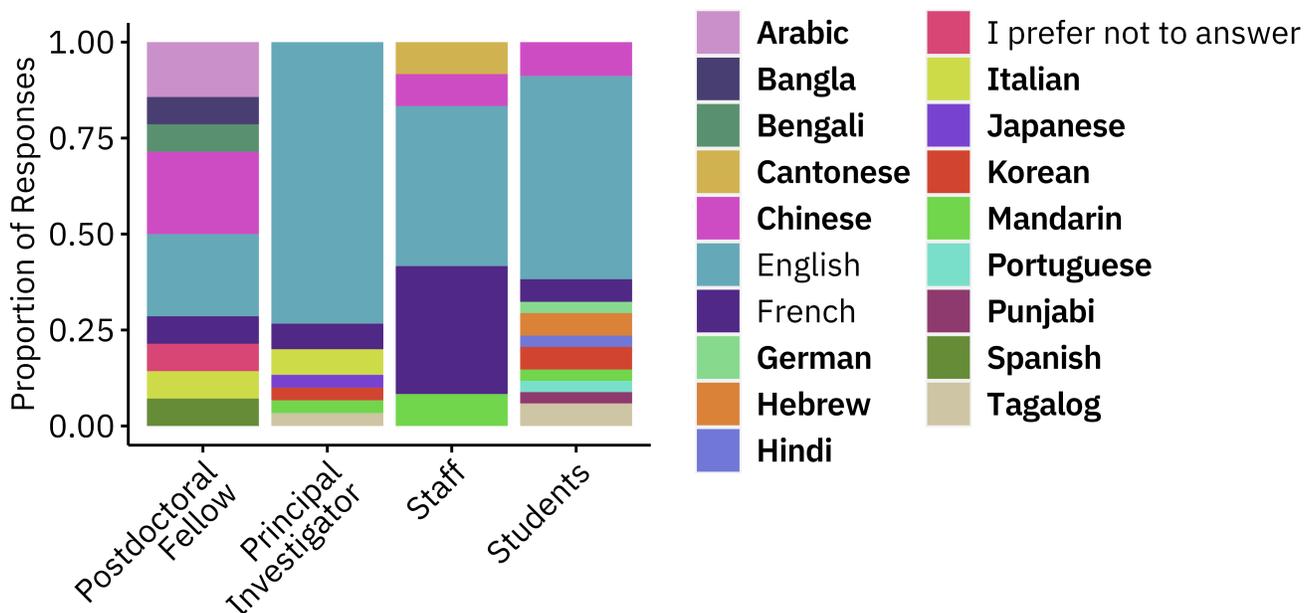
## Population Groups (continued)

The most commonly selected population group identity overall was White. CIRTN-R2FIC Principal Investigators predominantly identify as White (22/29). 4 of 17 PhD students and 4 of 7 Masters students identified as White, for a total of 8 of 25 Students. 4 of 12 Postdoctoral Fellows, 4 of 8 Research Associates, and 1 of the 2 Administrator respondents also self-reported as White. The next most-commonly selected population identity was Chinese: 5 Students, 3 Postdoctoral Fellows, 2 Principal Investigators, and 3 Staff identified as such.

## Languages

The next two survey questions were about languages. Question six asked the respondents which languages they learned in childhood and still understood. Only English and French were provided as options, with all other languages self-reported by respondents.

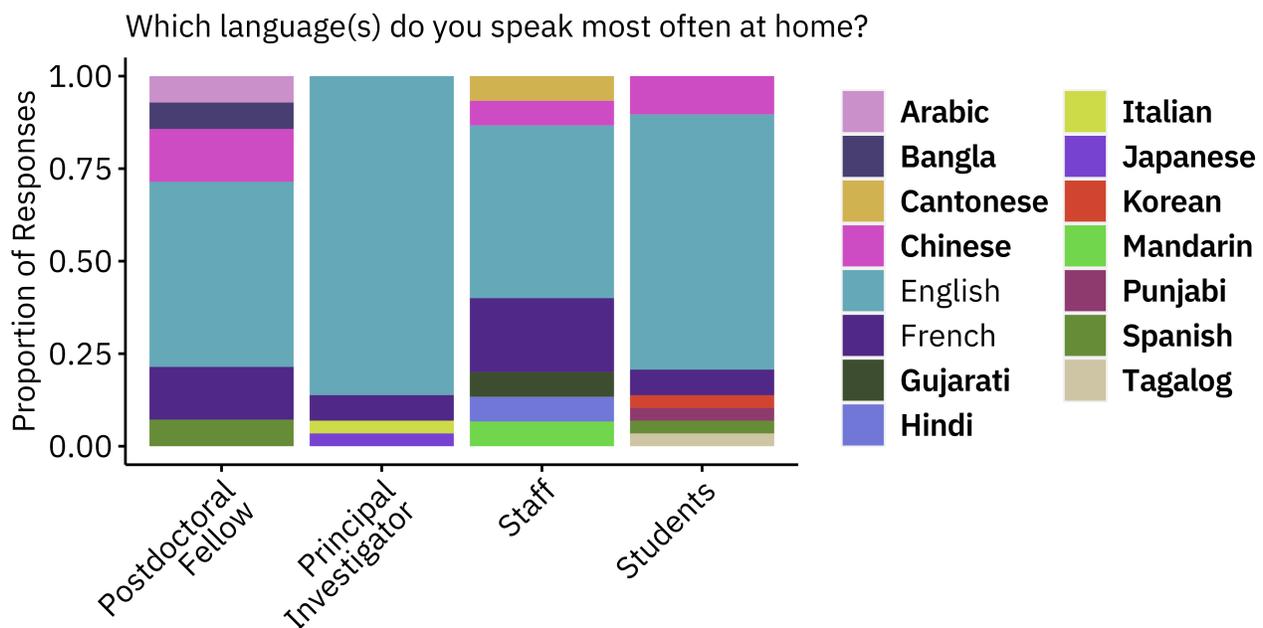
Which languages did you first learn at home in childhood and still understand?



**Bolded** languages were self-reported by survey respondents.

## Languages (continued)

Overall, 62% of respondents learned and still understand English, and 12% learned and still understand French. 14% of respondents learned and still understand at least two languages. 25% of Postdoctoral Fellows, 76% of Principal Investigators, 42% of Staff, and 72% of Students learned and still understand English. 8% (1 of 12) of Postdoctoral Fellows, 7% (2 of 29) of Principal Investigators, 25% (4 of 12) of Staff, and 8% (2 of 25) of Students learned and still understand French. Of the other languages, the next most commonly learned and still understood was Chinese (11 responses, including 1 Cantonese and 3 Mandarin).



**Bolded** languages were self-reported by survey respondents.

The seventh question asked which languages were currently spoken in the respondents' homes. Only English and French were provided as options, with all other languages self-reported by the respondents. 65% of respondents speak only English at home, 8% speak only French, and 17% speak another language. 10% of respondents speak at least two languages. After English and French, the language most commonly reported to be spoken at home (8 responses), was Chinese (including 1 response each for Cantonese and Mandarin).

# Discussion

We recognize that substantial challenges remain in achieving the full participation of equity-deserving groups – including women, racialized groups, Indigenous peoples, people with diverse gender identities, and people living with disabilities – in CIRTN-R2FIC. Our sample size was relatively small in this survey; however, the responses we collected suggest that more work is needed to understand and remove potential barriers to the full participation of equity-deserving groups in CIRTN-R2FIC.

It is well-established that bias influences indicators of excellence<sup>2</sup>; for example, studies show that women publish 20% fewer publications than men in the natural sciences, despite being equally qualified<sup>3</sup>, and that women are evaluated less favourably than men when reviewers are asked to assess the candidate’s track record, rather than the merits of their scientific record<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, Indigenous researchers have reported that having White settler approaches to research as the reference point for research excellence creates systemic barriers and reinforces bias. For example, restricting citations to written sources of information ignores important oral sources of knowledge, such as that from Elders<sup>5</sup>. These, and many other examples of the effects of bias, lead to the marginalization and exclusion of equity-deserving groups. In particular, we recognize greater barriers for people whose identities lie at the intersection of marginalized groups, such as women of colour.

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<sup>2</sup> CIHR, SSHRC, CRC, NSERC (2017). **Bias in Peer Review module.** (<https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/lms/e/bias/>)

<sup>3</sup> Rørstad, K., & Aksnes, D.W. (2016). **Publication rate expressed by age, gender and academic position – A large-scale analysis of Norwegian academic staff.** *Journal of Informetrics*, 9(2), 322.

<sup>4</sup> Witteman, H.O., Hendricks, M., Straus, S., & Tannenbaum, C. (2019). **Are gender gaps due to evaluations of the applicant or the science? A natural experiment at a national funding agency.** *The Lancet*, 393, 531-540.

<sup>5</sup> **The politics of citation: Is the peer review process biased against Indigenous academics?**

(<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/the-politics-of-citation-is-the-peer-review-process-biased-against-indigenous-academics-1.4547468>)

## Structural Barriers

The CIRTN-R2FIC EDI Committee seeks to understand and address specific structural barriers facing network members that might result in any underrepresentation seen in this report. For example, our survey had no respondents that self-identified as gay or lesbian. Because 1.7% of Canadians identify as gay or lesbian<sup>6</sup>, some sexual orientations may be underrepresented in the CIRTN-R2FIC community. Similarly, no respondents identified as trans or non-binary. 0.24% of Canadians aged 15 or over identify as trans or non-binary<sup>7</sup>, so this is not unexpected in a survey of this sample size. However, given the known barriers faced by individuals that are gender-diverse, trans, and gay and lesbian, we will continue to monitor these demographic groups closely in future surveys. We will also continue to monitor career progression in women. According to our survey data, there was a greater proportion of people identifying as women in the Students category than in more senior positions. We will therefore continue to gather information on how we can support women, trans, and non-binary members of the network throughout their careers, as well as people with diverse sexual orientations.

In the survey, only 0.48% of respondents self-identified as either Black or Indigenous. This suggests that people who identify as Black and/or Indigenous are underrepresented in CIRTN-R2FIC, as Canadian census data shows that 3.5% of Canadians self-identify as Black<sup>8</sup> and 4.9% as Indigenous<sup>9</sup>. It is a key aim of the CIRTN-R2FIC EDI Committee to address the systemic barriers leading to the decreased diversity in more senior roles, particularly for Principal Investigators.

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<sup>6</sup> [Same-sex couples and sexual orientation... by the numbers](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2015/smr08_203_2015)  
([https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2015/smr08\\_203\\_2015](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2015/smr08_203_2015))

<sup>7</sup> [A statistical portrait of Canada's diverse LGBTQ2+ communities](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm)  
(<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm>)

<sup>8</sup> [Diversity of the Black population in Canada: An overview](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2019002-eng.htm)  
(<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2019002-eng.htm>)

<sup>9</sup> [Aboriginal peoples in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a-eng.htm?indid=14430-1&indgeo=0)  
(<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a-eng.htm?indid=14430-1&indgeo=0>)

# Initiatives

At the end of the self-identification survey, respondents were asked to share any EDI-related questions or concerns. We received two suggestions and implemented the following initiatives as a direct result.

## Improved Accessibility

One respondent asked us to consider support for people with visual impairments or who may be hard of hearing. Particularly because Trainees — who may face more challenges in getting accessibility needs met — self-identified as persons with disabilities, the CIRTN-R2FIC EDI Committee responded by developing a document of guidelines to encourage speakers at network events like Seminar Series and Journal Club to make their presentations more accessible. These guidelines include recommendations on typeface, font size, line spacing, colours, and captions, and are now being sent out to all network speakers before they present. We also started enabling the Live Transcription Zoom feature on all Seminar Series and Journal Club presentations in November 2021. The recorded sessions are now uploaded to the CIRTN-R2FIC website with an audio transcript running alongside the video.

## French Communications

Another respondent raised the issue that Francophone students are a minority in Canada and that they may find it challenging that our network communications were being exclusively conducted in English. As a result, all network-wide emails are now sent in both English and French, with the help of [DeepL Translate](#). The feedback on this change has been overwhelmingly positive from the network members who reside in Québec.

# Future Directions

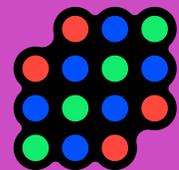
In 2022, the CIRTN-R2FIC EDI Committee aspires to accomplish the following:

- 1 Produce a longer-form EDI survey:** The EDI Committee is currently working on a survey with the aim of identifying strengths and weaknesses related to network EDI practices and principles. This survey will consist of nine questions; eight are agreement-level (strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree) and the last question is long-answer, asking respondents how CIRTN-R2FIC can help push forward EDI principles in their research. This survey will be disseminated in the spring of 2022 and the results will be analyzed and reported thereafter.
- 2 Inform and revise network processes:** As CIRTN-R2FIC continues to develop, the EDI Committee intends to generate resources and act in an advisory capacity with regards to awards, teaching, and research activities. All recommendations will be based on best EDI practices and principles.
- 3 Reproduce the self-identification survey:** The data presented in this inaugural report represent a baseline. As the survey is repeated over subsequent years, the EDI Committee will identify and monitor trends to see if and where intervention could be beneficial.
- 4 Expand membership:** As outlined in the [Terms of Reference](#), the membership cycle for any non-Principal Investigator member is one year. At the time of this publication (March 2022), many of the EDI Committee members will be deciding whether to renew or not. The EDI Committee is also interested in the possibility of adding to its numbers; if you are interested in becoming a member or getting involved in one of our initiatives, please see the [Get in Touch](#) section below.

# GET IN TOUCH

We are here to learn and listen. If you have any EDI-related questions, concerns, or feedback to share, please do not hesitate to let us know.

We will address all communications with care and confidentiality.



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