

Canadian research funding organizations sign San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)

A joint statement from Canada's five major national research funders

November 13, 2019 - Canada's five major national research funders are pleased to join research leaders around the world who are working to strengthen research excellence by ensuring robust, equitable and impactful measures of research assessment.

The Government of Canada's research funding agencies — the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\)](#), the [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada \(NSERC\)](#) and the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada \(SSHRC\)](#) (the Agencies); the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI); and [Genome Canada](#) — have signed the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), reaffirming their commitment to excellence in research evaluation and the importance of knowledge translation.

DORA is a global initiative to support the development and promotion of best practice in assessment of scholarly research. It aims to address the negative consequences of unintended overuse of journal publication as a primary indicator of quality for research output. To date, 1,557 organizations and 15,006 individuals are signatories to DORA. These include funders, publishers, professional societies, institutions and researchers.

The quality and impact of research cannot be measured through journal publications alone. Research results and outcomes are multifaceted, can reflect multiple types of knowledge and ways of knowing and must be assessed on their own merit. High-quality research outcomes are achieved in many ways, including but not limited to: publishing research articles; reporting new knowledge (such as presenting at conferences and other venues); developing new technologies, producing software and intellectual property; sharing data; contributing to policy decisions; producing highly trained personnel and working in partnership with various sectors of society. Increasingly, funding agencies, research institutions, First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, citizens and patients, and researchers themselves, agree on the importance of including a broader set of research outcomes and adopting assessment processes that recognize their value.

The DORA principles are reflected in CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC's overall approaches to research assessment, and in their shared commitment to continuous improvement in assessment practices. A number of the Agencies' initiatives and policies support research excellence and align with the recommendations in DORA, including [research data management practices](#), [open access publishing](#), [responsible conduct of research](#), [ethical conduct of research involving humans](#); and the commitment to re-examine research excellence through the [Tri-Agency Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Action Plan](#).

The CFI's review process is aligned with the principles outlined in DORA, and employs a comprehensive range of criteria to examine the excellence of the research and the team, as well as the need for the infrastructure and the benefits of the research to Canada. The CFI regularly re-examines the way excellence is measured to ensure that new learning, best practices and the progress of research itself are fully integrated into its assessment processes.

Genome Canada's research funding process involves consideration of an array of review criteria centered on previous and potential impact. Genome Canada has reviewed these criteria to confirm alignment with DORA, and has strengthened some areas of assessment to include factors such as influence on policy and supporting excellence in data management practices. Genome Canada is committed to the DORA principles and to ongoing improvement to the evaluation of research.

CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC, CFI and Genome Canada will work closely together and with the broader research community in Canada to review policies, programs, tools and practices to identify ways to improve how research is evaluated.

We firmly believe that the principles and guidance outlined in DORA will lead to more effective and relevant approaches to research evaluation, thereby strengthening research excellence in service to society.

[Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\)](#)

[Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada \(NSERC\)](#)

[Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada \(SSHRC\)](#)

[Canada Foundation for Innovation \(CFI\)](#)

[Genome Canada](#)

[Learn more about DORA and the CFI's commitment.](#)