



Group of Canadian Research Universities

Regroupement des universités de recherche du Canada

U15 Statement on Protecting Canadian Values and Canadian Research

September 28, 2021 (Ottawa, ON) – A defining characteristic of Canada’s world-class university system is its openness to the world. Global engagement is indispensable to the success of our top research-intensive universities, their competitiveness on the world stage, and their ability to enhance the quality of life of Canadians through learning, discovery, and community service.

This global engagement enables Canadian researchers to make cutting-edge breakthroughs as they work in collaboration with others worldwide. It enables our universities to attract and educate many of the world’s best students. It enables Canada to recruit outstanding global experts to teach and conduct research. And it ensures that Canadian university students are enriched by engaging with classmates from a wide diversity of backgrounds. Welcoming talent from around the world, regardless of country of origin, is an essential element of Canada’s current and future success as an open, inclusive, and prosperous nation. Ultimately, the global exchange of ideas is made possible by this global exchange of people.

The leaders, faculty members and administrators of Canada’s universities are well aware that some foreign powers and organizations seek to exploit and abuse the very openness and inclusivity that drives our success and world-class performance. Individually, and as a community, we remain committed to working with our partners in government to ensure that we can protect our nation against such threats. Universities have already made significant investments in the development of sophisticated risk management frameworks and associated policies and practices, including the management of risk associated with international collaborations, research partnerships and the protection of research data, research results and intellectual property. We are continuing these efforts and will remain vigilant to the risks that stem from global research engagement.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that our openness and inclusivity are among our greatest strengths and the very reason we continue to attract many of the world’s greatest minds to work alongside our researchers and educators. We must also recognize that academic freedom and institutional autonomy are foundational principles that ensure our institutions remain free from political interference, capable of speaking truth to power, and responsive to the social, cultural, and economic needs of Canadians.

We strongly encourage the Government of Canada to implement security measures in a manner that does not result in the inadvertent targeting or profiling of the members of any one community. Further, we recommend that any security assessments be conducted in a transparent manner to ensure the community clearly understands the nature of the risks that are being assessed.

Representing Canada's leading research-intensive universities, we remain committed to protecting not only our national security, but also the values that underlie our success as an open, diverse, inclusive and prosperous nation.

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The U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities is a collective of some of Canada's most research-intensive universities. Canada's U15 universities are home to world-class researchers using state-of-the-art research infrastructure to make ground-breaking discoveries. Canada's U15 institutions undertake critically important fundamental research, train tomorrow's citizens, entrepreneurs and leaders, and work with partners from the public, private and government sectors to mobilize knowledge and capitalize on it. Top-quality university research is the foundation of our innovation ecosystem, which is one of Canada's core competitive advantages.

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