**Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)**

**Strategic Excellence and Equity**

**in Recruitment and Retention (STEER/R) Program**

**Terms of Reference and Fund Application Process**

Last Revised: September 27, 2022

# Program Purpose

McMaster University embraces the concept of inclusive excellence, which makes explicit that meaningful inclusion of diverse people and perspectives is essential to advancing academic, educational, and organizational excellence and contributing to the higher learning goals that foster equitable, prosperous, and sustainable societies. However, McMaster recognizes that students and scholars who belong to particular social groups that have been historically under-represented in higher education – collectively referred to as *equity-deserving groups[[1]](#footnote-1)* (EDGs) – continue to face barriers to equal access and opportunity in education and employment within the academy. Moreover, the university acknowledges that diverse curricula and research, inclusive teaching pedagogies, and equity-related scholarship remain under-valued. An inclusive excellence framework requires the use of more expansive and equitable methods of evaluating, recognizing, and rewarding merit to improve equality of access and opportunity, enhance inclusion, and drive aspirations towards excellence[[2]](#footnote-2).

In 2020, McMaster established the **S**trategic **E**xcellence and **E**quity in **R**ecruitment & **R**etention (**STEER/R**) Program as a pilot to catalyze commitments to inclusive excellence. Specifically, the Program aims to provide central seed funding for transformative initiatives that aim to improve (1) student access, experience, and success, and (2) faculty and staff hiring, engagement, career progression, and leadership advancement among EDGs.

# Funds Available

The Provost will make up to **$2M** available from the University Fund for the STEER/R Program in each of the first five years of the pilot, at which time the Program will be assessed in terms of its impact, relevance, and sustainability.

# Initiatives Eligible for STEER/R Program Funding

Initiatives that will be eligible for funding are those that support the purpose of the Program as described above. Below is a non-exhaustive list describing examples of eligible initiatives for the STEER/R Program.

* initiating the accelerated recruitment and hiring of EDG faculty and staff where there are large disciplinary/departmental representational gaps
* securing a dual career faculty hire
* subsidizing appropriate supports for EDG faculty and staff
* establishing venues for community-building and communication among and across EDG faculty, staff, and students, especially to enhance connection, inclusion and belonging, as well as to network and collaborate on research, teaching, and professional interests
* renegotiating terms of employment to retain mid-career and established EDG faculty and staff who have demonstrated excellence in teaching and research, program development, research and implementation
* establishing contractually limited appointments and post-doctoral fellowships for EDG scholars, and other initiatives to diversify future candidate pools available for tenure-track and tenure appointments
* establishing contractually limited appointments for staff positions that would strengthen the administrative capacity of EDG programs, research centres or networks
* designing, developing, and delivering interdisciplinary and community-engaged courses with clear social, global, environmental equity, justice and sustainability learning outcomes
* designing, developing, and delivering resources, programs and services to advance equity, diversity and inclusion goals
* establishing bursaries and scholarships, as well as other student access and success programs, for EDG students
* other initiatives that are aligned with the goals of the STEER/R Program

# How to Submit a Funding Proposal

Proposals will be reviewed and assessed for eligibility twice a year: mid-May and mid-November.

Individuals or groups may submit STEER/R Program funding proposals by completing the STEER/R Program Funding Proposal Application Form, by either the 11:59 pm **May 15 or Nov 15 deadline**. Proposals should identify whether the request is for one-time funding, for time-bound initiatives, or for either single or multi-year funding to a maximum of three years for ongoing initiatives, with the understanding that the unit will absorb any ongoing costs beyond that time. Proposals must receive appropriate executive sponsorship.

# How Proposals will be Assessed

The Provost is responsible for approving all requests, in consultation with the STEER/R Program Advisory Group, and considering the following principles, priorities, and criteria:

* Availability of funds and consideration of one-time or multi-year commitments
* Relevance to pressing equity challenges and inclusive excellence goals
* Alignment with institutional and unit-level strategic priorities
* Opportunity for cross unit collaboration or synergies to leverage resources
* Soundness and feasibility of the plan and potential for success
* Fiscal health/capacity/commitment of units to sustain investments over time
* Fair consideration of proposals and equitable (not equal) allocation of funds across units

The STEER/R Program Advisory Group will be chaired by the Associate Vice-President Equity and Inclusion (AVPEI) and include the Senior Manager, Office of the Provost.

The Advisory Committee will consist of:

* one Faculty Dean (or delegated Associate Dean),
* the Chair (or delegate) of the African and Caribbean Faculty Association of McMaster,
* the Chair (or delegate) of the Indigenous Education Council,
* the Chair (or delegate) of the Employee Resource Group for Black, Indigenous, and Racialized Staff

Members will delegate replacements where there are conflicts of interest between Advisory Group members and submitting individuals and groups or endorsing leaders.

**Outcomes of proposal funding are anticipated to be determined by June 15 and December 15, but may take longer depending on the volume and nature of applications submitted.**

# STEER/R Program Funding Proposal Application Form

Completed application forms are to be emailed by the deadline (11:59 pm May 15 or November 15) to [Nancy McKenzie](mailto:sheelenl@mcmaster.ca), Senior Manager, Office of the Provost. ***Submissions must not exceed 8 pages using single spaced 11-point Calibri, an accessible sans serif font. Please submit your application as a Word document.***

## **1. Applicant Details**

Name(s):

Academic/Administrative Unit/Faculty Association:

School/Department/Area/Program:

Email Address(es):

## **2. Nature of Funding Request:**

Proposal Title(s) (if there are multiple projects, please specify all titles):

Total STEER/R Funds Requested: $

❒ One-time funding for time-bound initiative

❒ Single or multi-year funding for potentially ongoing initiatives. Specify years:

❒ New/pilot project that could be considered for longer term funding in the future

❒ Existing project with promising early results requiring accelerant to scale and increase impact

## **3. Initiative Details (maximum 4 pages)**

Describe the initiative in detail, including rationale for the need, link to inclusive excellence goals, and any cross-disciplinary collaborations with campus and/or community partners, if applicable.

## **4. Potential Benefits/Impact and Measures of Success (maximum 1 page)**

Describe the expected benefits/impacts of the initiative and how its success will be measured.

## **5. Budget and Justification (maximum 2 pages)**

Provide the budget and justification details, including all expected financial contributions from the STEER/R Program and other sources of funding, as well as commentary on sustainability of the initiative.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |  |

## **7. References (maximum 1 page)**

## **7. Executive Sponsorship**

Obtain endorsement from the appropriate Faculty Dean or Associate/Assistant Vice-President.

Name of Executive: Signature: Date:

1. EDG refers to equity-deserving groups historically and contemporarily under-represented, underutilized and underserved in higher education. EDGs include (1) the four federally designated groups (FDGs) – Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) peoples, members of racialized communities including people of Black/African descent and diaspora, persons with disabilities, women and particularly those in STEM fields, and (2) members of sexual orientation and gender identify (SOGI) minoritized groups (i.e., 2SLGBTQ+ communities), who also experience workplace barriers in higher educations. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Towards Inclusive Excellence: McMaster University’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy, 2019](https://equity.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/03/EDI-Strategy-Towards-Inclusive-Excellence-2020.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)