

Boosting international research collaboration for a better future**The Ottawa Declaration, May 2, 2025****Global Research-Intensive Universities Network**

Our associations collectively represent 158 of the leading research universities across Canada, Europe, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany and Australia. These universities share long-standing relationships in research and academic exchange that have delivered far-reaching societal benefits.

Now, amid shifting geopolitics and growing international uncertainty, the global research community must double down on its collaborative approach, which accelerates knowledge sharing and creates greater opportunities for innovation to benefit all societies. In this context, it is urgent that leading research universities leverage their international relationships to increase collaboration for collective societal benefit.

In 2022, our associations specified five principles that underpin the work of leading research universities: trust; diversity; openness; stewardship; and freedom. These Leiden Principles emphasize that teaching, research and societal engagement at the highest levels depend upon respecting the best of human values at the heart of democratic, inclusive and open societies.

In 2024, our associations reaffirmed these principles by focusing on six outcomes of science and scholarship that respond directly to the changing geopolitical landscape. The Berlin Statement describes the increasing need to equip learners with critical thinking skills and an enhanced ability to engage respectfully in open debate in complex circumstances. Moreover, this statement emphasizes how world-class research is increasingly essential to confront daunting global challenges such as food security, pandemics, and cybersecurity.

Today, with this Ottawa Declaration, our respective associations commit to intensified engagement based on the defining characteristics of leading research universities.

Acting for the public good: Our universities are economic and cultural powerhouses, working with all sectors locally and globally. We seek to tap the entire pool of talented and motivated

individuals and partners, and to collaborate with all sectors in working to advance knowledge and understanding for a better future. In this way, our universities are anchor institutions for their communities and regions with global connections that bring ideas, research findings and talent together to address international challenges. As trusted partners, our associations can and must do even more to facilitate and encourage collaboration across all borders for the public good.

Academic freedom and institutional autonomy: We collectively reaffirm the fundamental importance of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, including the freedom to teach, conduct and publish research in keeping with scientific and scholarly norms and practices, and free from discrimination, harassment and coercion. This freedom and autonomy allow researchers and institutions to help make our societies and economies more inclusive and therefore stronger and more resilient. Moreover, universities promote mutual respect and the ability to disagree in safe environments. The result is that universities can tackle even the most difficult subjects to enhance the collective quality of life. We commit to building on past contributions by bolstering our efforts to support academic freedom and institutional autonomy in all global research collaborations.

Integrity, security and the responsible conduct of research: Since the mid-20th century, scientists and scholars have developed, in collaboration with governments, policies and practices that define and promote integrity and the responsible conduct of research. In the spirit of continuous improvement, this work has increasingly specified research ethics for projects involving humans and animals as well as the rest of the environment. With the increase in hostile actors seeking to steal, misuse and exploit research and intellectual property, policies and practices have recently been developed to promote research that is secure as well as open. To facilitate and enhance international research collaboration, our associations commit to promoting harmonization across policies and practices to better support academic integrity and security, and to facilitate the responsible conduct of research across borders.

Transparency: In international collaboration, transparency such as in funding sources, co-authorship and references, must be prioritized to ensure the responsible conduct of research. Leading research universities insist on verifiable trustworthiness in all scholarly and scientific activities. Transparency is particularly important as a safeguard for research activities in a turbulent international landscape. For these reasons, we commit to increasing our efforts to promote appropriate transparency in all global research collaborations.

Taken together, our associations commit to doing all we can to enhance international collaboration among leading research universities to better realize transformational advancements in science, research and innovation for a better 21st century for all societies.

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