ANTI-RACISM POLICY

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Date of Next Review	

Background

The Real-Life Research Institute (RLRI) is committed to fostering an environment that is safe, inclusive, and free from racism in all its forms. We acknowledge the First Peoples of Canada, on whose traditional lands we live and work, and affirm our responsibility to advance reconciliation, equity, and respect

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for Indigenous rights, cultures, and knowledge systems

This Anti-Racism Policy provides a framework to guide RLRI's practices, research, and community engagement in addressing and preventing racism. It aligns with Canadian legislation and strategies, including the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Employment Equity Act, Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy (2024–2028), and the Black Justice Strategy (2025 Implementation Plan).

Outline of the Policy

- Definitions of racism and anti-racism

- Purpose and intended outcomes

- Scope and application

- Consultation and accountability

- Implementation and monitoring

What Racism Is and How It Arises

Racism is prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against individuals or groups based on race, color, descent, national or ethnic origin. It may arise through individual behavior, institutional practices, systemic barriers, or unconscious bias. Within organizations, research or program implementation, racism can emerge in hiring, funding allocation, research design, dissemination, partnerships, or representation.

Definition of Terms

- **Anti-racism**: Proactive measures to identify, challenge, and eliminate racism at all levels.

- **Discrimination**: Unequal treatment based on race or other prohibited grounds under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

- **Microaggressions**: Subtle or indirect comments or actions that reinforce stereotypes or marginalize individuals.

- **Systemic racism**: Patterns of exclusion embedded in structures, policies, or institutional culture.

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- **Active bystander**: Someone who not only witnesses a situation but also takes action to keep a situation from escalating or to disrupt a problematic situation.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Affirm RLRI's institutional commitment to eliminate racism in research, community engagement, and workplace culture.

- Ensure compliance with national laws and frameworks, including the Canadian Human Rights Act, Employment Equity Act, and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation Act.

- Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all our research and program activities, with particular attention to Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities.

- Build an accountable, transparent, and respectful organizational culture.

Intended Outcomes

- Increase representation and equitable participation of underrepresented groups in research and leadership.

- Foster a research environment where all individuals feel safe, valued, and respected.

- Contribute knowledge and practice to the national effort to eliminate racism.

Benefits

- Improved staff and researcher well-being.

- Enhanced innovation through diverse perspectives.

- Stronger credibility and alignment with Canadian equity and reconciliation priorities.

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Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees, researchers, contractors, volunteers, interns, board members, and all stakeholders associated with RLRI.

- Recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, and performance evaluation.

- Research design, data collection, ethics review, and dissemination of findings.

- Workplace practices, staff relations, and grievance processes.

- Engagement with communities, research participants, program participants, and partners.

- Participation in conferences, workshops, and public events.

- Related contexts: Publications, public communications, funding decisions, and collaborations.

Consultation

This policy was developed through a collaborative process involving staff, researchers, students, and external advisors, including Indigenous knowledge holders, Black community representatives, and experts in anti-racism.

The consultation process included:

- Staff and community surveys to identify barriers and experiences of racism.

- Roundtables with equity-deserving groups.

- Workshops to define shared values and priorities.

- Input from external legal and policy advisors specializing in human rights and anti-racism.

- The Real-Life Research Institute will continue to consult stakeholders regularly to ensure the policy remains relevant and effective.

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Staff Rights and Responsibilities

Staff Rights

All staff, researchers, contractors, volunteers, and all associates of RLRI are entitled to:

- Substantive equality in recruitment, employment, training, and promotion processes.

- A safe, respectful, and positive workplace free from racism, discrimination, or harassment.

- Equitable access to professional development, mentorship, and research opportunities.

- The right to lodge a complaint or report racism without fear of victimization or retaliation.

- Confidential handling of complaints and access to fair and timely resolution processes.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff, researchers, and volunteers take responsibility for upholding this policy by:

- Maintaining respectful and professional relationships with colleagues, supervisors, and partners.

- Following the standards, processes, and values set out in this policy and related codes of conduct.

- Identifying, challenging, and reporting racism, discrimination, or harassment when observed.

- Cooperating fully with complaints procedures and investigations.

- Engaging in anti-racism and cultural competency training as required.

- Cultivating an anti-racist, inclusive, and safe work culture.

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- Addressing any biases or underlying beliefs that may negatively impact their work and their interaction with others.

- Self-educating on anti-racism and implementing anti-racist best practices in their work and relations with others.

- Embracing positive, informed, and inclusive attitudes towards others.

- Ensuring the voices of systemically marginalized groups are heard in decision-making.

- Avoiding acts of racism or discrimination.

- Support anyone who claims to be experiencing racism and give them information on where they can get help/advice.

- Ensure the design and delivery of projects are culturally safe, respectful, and inclusive

Manager Responsibilities

Managers, supervisors, and senior leadership hold a duty of care to create and sustain an anti-racist workplace.

All managers and leaders are responsible for:

- Informing staff of their rights and responsibilities under this policy.

- Ensuring recruitment, evaluation, and promotion processes are equitable and free from bias.

- Responding promptly and fairly when informed of alleged racism or discrimination.

- Modelling positive, inclusive, and professional behavior at all times.

- Communicating transparently about complaint processes, outcomes, and protections.

- Supporting staff participation in anti-racism training and equity initiatives.

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- Assess systems, policies, and practices to ensure they are not harmful or reinforce bias and discrimination.

- Evaluate anti-racism implementation initiatives and report to the Board, staff, and the public as appropriate.

- Fostering a work culture of respect, inclusion, and belonging.

- Providing learning opportunities for the Board and staff to increase their awareness, understanding, and application of anti-racism practices.

- Devise safe, equitable, and inclusive work environments at all levels of the organization.

- Creating safe spaces for discussions on anti-racism and integrating intersectional perspectives into our work.

- Monitor the work environment to ensure appropriate conduct and practice among staff.

- Support staff or associates in identifying and reporting incidents of racism.

- Treat reports or complaints of racism with all seriousness and confidentiality.

- Fairly investigate allegations of racism, make recommendations, and support the resolution of the matter(rephrase).

- providing feedback and necessary information to the individual/s who are affected by racism.

- Ensuring that staff, volunteers, all associates, as well as project participants, are made aware of standards of cultural safety and accepted behavior, as well as our rejection of all forms of racism.

Senior Leadership (Board and Executive) is additionally responsible for:

- Embedding anti-racism principles in strategic planning, research priorities, and partnerships.

- Allocating resources to support policy implementation, monitoring, and

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review.

- Regularly reporting on institutional progress toward equity and anti-racism goals.

- Providing leadership in aiding the organization to fulfill its mission and goals relating to anti-racism and other similar policies.

- Ensuring the Board's own ways of working, including deliberations and decision-making, reflect RLRI's commitment to anti-racism.

- Providing oversight and holding senior management accountable for making progress on anti-racism policy.

Workplace Misconduct

Racism in any form is considered workplace misconduct and will not be tolerated. This includes:

Discrimination

Unequal treatment based on race, color, national origin, or ethnicity.

Example: A racialized researcher being overlooked for promotion despite equal qualifications.

Casual Racism / Microaggressions

Everyday comments, jokes, or behaviors that stereotype, demean, or marginalize individuals. Example: Assuming a colleague's role or ability based on their accent or appearance.

Difference: Discrimination often involves systemic or structural denial of opportunity, while microaggressions are subtle, repeated behaviors that reinforce exclusion.

Vilification

Public acts that incite hatred, contempt, or severe ridicule of a person or group based on race. Example: Derogatory statements made in public forums or online platforms affiliated with RLRI.

Victimization

Any adverse treatment against an individual because they made, or supported, a

complaint of racism. Example: A staff member facing reduced responsibilities or exclusion after complaining.

Prevention

Real Life Research Institute is committed to taking reasonable, practical steps to prevent racism and discrimination by:

- Providing regular anti-racism, cultural safety, and unconscious bias training to all staff.

- Embedding equity considerations into recruitment, procurement, research design, and ethics review processes.

- Establishing safe channels for reporting and dialogue.

- Promoting awareness campaigns, inclusive events, and community partnerships.

- Conducting equity audits and reviewing data to identify and address systemic barriers.

- Promote cultural safety, anti-racism, and work towards eliminating racist behavior within our work environment and in the undertaking of our projects.

We acknowledge that due to imbalances in power behind racism and other forms of discrimination, those experiencing racism may feel unsafe to address it directly. Individuals who witness racism are encouraged to act by:

a) Calling out the racism
b) Giving support to the victim/survivor
c) Collecting evidence

Reporting and Response

We encourage and support individuals who experience or witness racism to raise concerns with the individual displaying racist behavior by identifying the behavior and asking for it to stop, only if they feel safe to do so. Safety may include physical, emotional, and cultural safety.

We shall, in all confidence, grant support to individuals who desire to take the step of raising concerns with the person displaying racist behavior.

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Where request for racist behavior to change is ignored, or the individual experiencing racist behavior is not comfortable raising the issue directly, they should report the matter to the Safeguarding officer, where possible, with relevant information, such as video, photographic, written, or other recorded evidence.

Reporting Process

- Staff may report incidents of racism to their supervisor, HR, or directly to the Safeguarding officer.

- Reports may be made confidentially in writing, in person, or via anonymous reporting channels through the RLRI's whistle-blowing contact.

- All complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days and investigated in a timely and impartial manner.

- Any action that threatens or incites violence towards an individual or group of individuals based on race will immediately be referred to the security, as it is an immediate threat. Racial hatred and vilification are unlawful and will be referred to the legal authorities.

Response and Consequences

- Breaches of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include verbal or written warnings, mandatory training, reassignment, suspension, or termination of employment/contract.

- In severe cases, matters may be referred to external bodies such as human rights commissions or legal authorities.

- We will not tolerate any coercion or harassment aimed at preventing any individual from reporting an incident of racism. Any such behavior is a breach of this policy and will be investigated accordingly.

- Anyone found to falsely and maliciously report an incident will be subject to disciplinary action. However, if, after investigation, a report is not considered to be a breach of this Policy, no action shall be taken towards the reporter.

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- Incidents of racism, outcomes of investigations, and interventions undertaken shall be recorded and assessed for any systemic issues that need to be addressed

Other Relevant Policies

This policy works alongside other RLRI's internal policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding Code of Conduct

- Finance Policy

- Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) Policy

- Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy

- Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy

- EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Policy

- Screening and Background Check Policy

- Whistle Blowing Policy

Review and Governance

Review Timeline

- This Anti-Racism Policy will be reviewed annually, with the first review to occur 12 months after adoption.
- Interim reviews may take place if new legislation, national strategies, or internal needs arise.

Review Process

- Led by the Equity and Inclusion Office in consultation with staff, researchers, and external advisors.
- Methods include staff surveys, equity audits, and consultation workshops.

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Governance

- The Board of Directors holds ultimate accountability for this policy.

- Day-to-day management and monitoring are delegated to the Managing Director and the Safeguarding Officer.

- Progress reports will be shared with staff annually, outlining achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement.

- Policy updates will be communicated promptly to all stakeholders.

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