

WCEI_Legal_Terms of Reference (ToR)_Sept_25

1. Background and Context

WCEI is a non-profit academic body committed to advancing research, dialogue, and education in line with the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Guided by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, the Government of Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy, and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the organization fosters an environment that values cultural pluralism, gender equity, and the elimination of systemic barriers to participation.

2. Purpose of the Organization

To promote academic excellence and knowledge-sharing across disciplines while ensuring inclusivity and equitable representation.

To foster multicultural understanding and respect for diversity in Canadian society.

To advance anti-racism education and dismantle systemic discrimination in academia and beyond.

To uphold and promote gender equity in line with the UN CEDAW framework.

To create platforms for marginalized voices, ensuring representation in research, teaching, and leadership.

3. Scope of Work

The organization shall:

Conduct academic research, publications, and seminars on multiculturalism, anti-racism, and gender equity.

Develop partnerships with Canadian and international universities, research centers, and community organizations.

Organize conferences, workshops, and community dialogues on topics aligned with Canadian and UN commitments.

Provide training, mentorship, and support for students, researchers, and academics from underrepresented backgrounds.

Advocate for inclusive policies within academia and the broader social context.

4. Governance

The organization shall be governed by a Board of Directors or Advisory Council, reflecting gender balance, cultural diversity, and expertise across disciplines.

Leadership roles shall be allocated on the basis of merit, equity, and inclusivity, ensuring meaningful representation of women, Indigenous peoples, racialized groups, and other historically marginalized communities.

Decision-making processes shall be transparent, democratic, and consistent with Canadian legal frameworks and UN human rights standards.

5. Guiding Principles

The organization shall operate under the following principles:

Respect for Diversity: Upholding the Canadian Multiculturalism Act to ensure the recognition and celebration of cultural diversity.

Commitment to Anti-Racism: Actively identifying, challenging, and eliminating systemic racism within academic and institutional structures.

Gender Equity and Inclusion: Implementing the commitments of the UN CEDAW to ensure equal opportunities for women and gender-diverse individuals.

Non-Discrimination: Ensuring that no person is excluded from participation based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, ability, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic background.

Transparency and Accountability: Maintaining ethical standards in governance, finance, and academic practice.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Directors / Executive Committee: Provide strategic leadership, approve policies, oversee governance, and ensure compliance with Canadian and UN standards.

Members: Contribute to academic activities, research, and advocacy aligned with the organization's mission.

Committees (e.g., Research, Equity & Inclusion, Finance, Policy): Support specific functions and ensure diverse perspectives in all areas.

7. Membership

Open to academics, researchers, practitioners, and students who support the mission and values of the organization.

Membership shall reflect the pluralistic and multicultural nature of Canada.

Equal participation and leadership opportunities shall be provided regardless of race, gender, or other identities.

8. Accountability and Compliance

The organization shall comply with the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act (NFP Act).

Activities shall align with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Multiculturalism Act, and the Anti-Racism Strategy.

Gender equity and non-discrimination commitments shall be monitored and evaluated regularly in accordance with CEDAW obligations.

Annual reports will be published detailing achievements, diversity representation, and compliance with guiding frameworks.

9. Review of Terms of Reference

This ToR shall be reviewed every three years, or earlier if required by legislative or policy changes.

Revisions will be made in consultation with stakeholders to ensure ongoing alignment with Canadian laws and international human rights commitments.

10. Adoption

This Terms of Reference is adopted by the Board of Directors of [Organization Name] on this ___ day of _____, 2025.

Signatures:

_____ (Chairperson)

_____ (Secretary)