

## CRDCN ACCESS AND FEE-FOR-SERVICE (AFFS) POLICY

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This document contains the fees policy and guidelines for Research Data Centre (RDC) users to access microdata through a Collaborating Institution in the Canadian Research Data Centre Network (CRDCN). Please consult the definitions in Appendix 1 and the CRDCN website. This document will be updated periodically. Supplementary material will be made available to Academic Directors at CRDCN Collaborating Institutions related to this policy.

### Section 1 – Context and purpose for revision of the AFFS policy

The CRDCN AFFS policy has been updated to take into account:

- 1) renewed funding from CFI, SSHRC and CIHR to provide microdata access to advance research;
- 2) the Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIA) between CRDCN/McMaster University and Collaborating Institutions;
- 3) growth projections for new institutions to join the CRDCN;
- 4) the launch of the virtual Research Data Centre (vRDC) and remote access; and
- 5) the shift to contract-based invoicing.

The revised policy aims to anticipate the launch of the vRDC and the implications for user access both in-person and remotely. Remote access through CRDCN will be possible only if the user is employed or a student at a CRDCN Collaborating Institution that has signed the Inter-institutional agreement.

### Section 2 – Principles guiding AFFS policy revisions

- 1) Priority data access for Collaborating Institutions – CRDCN Collaborating Institutions collectively contribute resources to the operation of the network. Contracts for users doing self-directed academic work at these Collaborating Institutions are regarded as *Primary User Contracts* and will be given priority in the fee structure and the framework more broadly for data access.
- 2) Cost-efficient, streamlined and sustainable access – Fees will be contained to standardize and enable access by users in all categories. The fee structure also aims to present a sustainable financial model and minimize the administrative burden for CRDCN.

Note – Monitoring the implications of the policy and further revising as appropriate:

- The implications of the revised policy and corresponding fee structure will be monitored to inform further revisions to this document as appropriate.
- The policy anticipates new entrants to the Network, and the fee structure balances the need for access by users not at Collaborating Institutions with the imperative to incentivize new entrants to join the Network.
- The policy aims to address the transition from the previous AFFS model (fees by blocks of hours) to the new model (fees per contract-year) and balance this with the wider shift by Statistics Canada to contract-based invoicing.
- Minor revisions and adjustments to costs in this policy may be made periodically to provide clarity and reflect increases in incurred costs. Such revisions will not require CRDCN Board approval.

List of appendices

- Appendix 1 – Definitions
- Appendix 2 – Access instructions
- Appendix 3 – Interim AFFS Approach Guidelines
- Appendix 4 – CRDCN Collaborating Institutions and core funders
- Appendix 5 – Access and Fee-For-Service flow chart

### Section 3 – User categories, descriptions and fee structures

The tables below describe the categories of users on a data access contract and the fee structure (in Canadian dollars) that applies to users in each category.

#### Notes to interpret the tables below:

- Maximum number of users per contract – The cost per contract fee structure in the tables below is based on a maximum of three users per contract in order to contain the costs associated with required login/licensing on each contract. “Viewer status” for users is being integrated into the data access application process to include users that will not be issued a login credential. If a Principal Investigator would like more than three users with login credentials on a particular contract, they will be required to submit a request for approval to the Data Access Liaison with a rationale for incurring the additional licensing costs on the contract.
- User contracts belonging to more than one category – When a contract has users of multiple types, the fees for the contract will be based on the highest price (e.g., a user that is not at a Collaborating Institution working on a contract with a user at a Collaborating Institution would be charged fees according to the category “other user contracts” in Table 3).
- Refer to Appendix 1 for definitions.
- Note that fees in the tables below are in Canadian dollars.

**Table 1 – Primary User Contracts – Users do not pay fees for their contracts/projects**

Category	Description	Fee structure (annual/per contract) *
Primary - A	Users employed by a CRDCN Collaborating Institution doing self-directed academic work at the RDC lab on their campus or via remote access.	Fee of \$3,620 per project with an active contract. <a href="#">This is paid by CRDCN and/or in accordance with the Inter-Institutional Agreement signed by a Collaborating Institution.</a>
Primary - B	Users whose project is directly funded by an agency providing collaborative research project support to CRDCN, including but not limited to CRDCN calls for proposals, and/or core financial support for the sustained research activities of the CRDCN (i.e., CIHR, SSHRC, CFI, FRQ) and Statistics Canada (e.g., for data development or academic research support).	
Primary - C	A professor emeritus affiliated with a Collaborating Institution or an agency providing core financial support to CRDCN (eligible for access only through an RDC lab unless approved for remote access by the Collaborating Institution’s Data Access Liaison).	
Primary - D	A student doing self-directed academic work as part of their degree program.	

\* Fee currently reflects \$3,500 Statistics Canada cost per contract plus effective tax (3.41%). McMaster’s Accounting and Financial Reporting department is currently reviewing how the tax is handled within this policy, which may result in a change to this fee.

**Table 2 – Secondary User Contracts – Users at Collaborating Institutions required to pay fees**

Category	Main category description	Sub-category and description	Set up cost vRDC (year 1 only)	Access cost vRDC (year 1 + annually)	RDC lab surcharge (year 1 + annually)
Secondary	Users employed by a CRDCN Collaborating Institution (including professors emeriti and students)	A – User doing self-directed academic work with data access at a Collaborating Institution, where the user’s home institution does not have an RDC lab on their campus.	No cost to user as this fee is paid per Table 1.	No cost to user as this fee paid is per Table 1.	\$1,200 paid by the collaborating institution.
		B – Research is being conducted on behalf of a charitable or nonprofit organization.	\$2,260	\$6,135	\$1,200
		C – Research is being conducted on behalf of government.	\$2,260	\$6,135	\$1,200
		D – Research is being conducted on behalf of the private sector (including industry associations).	\$2,260	\$7,029	\$1,200

Note: Secondary user subcategories B, C and D are only AFFS costs and do not reflect fees for user time (e.g., course release etc.).

Table 3 – Other User Contracts and corresponding required fees

Category	Main category description*	Sub-category and description	Set up cost RDC (year 1 only)	Access cost – RDC (year 1 + annually)
Other	Users that are <u>not</u> employed by a CRDCN Collaborating Institution.  <u>Note:</u> Remote access via vRDC is not available to these users.	A – User doing self-directed academic work with data access at a Collaborating Institution.	\$2,260	\$6,117
		B – Research is being conducted on behalf of a charitable or nonprofit organization.	\$2,260	\$7,695
		C – Research is being conducted on behalf of government.	\$2,260	\$7,695
		D – Research is being conducted on behalf of the private sector (including industry associations).	\$2,260	\$8,879

\* The access costs for Other User Contracts aim to support equitable access for post-secondary institutions that are not currently Collaborative Institutions. Also note that “Access cost – RDC (annual)” charge includes an RDC lab surcharge of \$1,200 per year.

## Appendix 1 – Definitions

**Co-investigator** - A Co-investigator refers to a user listed as such on the RDC contract. Not all co-authors need be co-investigators, nor do all co-investigators need to be co-authors. However, for the research to be “self-directed” academic work, it needs to be so from the perspective of the Co-investigators (i.e., the Co-investigator will be responsible for research design and authorship with the Principal Investigator). That is to say, at least one Co-investigator should have a superordinate role in research design and authorship to any potential co-author not listed on the RDC application.

**Collaborating Institution:** An institution that has signed the Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA) with CRDCN. See Appendix 5.

**Contract (active):** A fully executed Microdata Research Contract (MRC) with complete security clearances and available data. Contracts are active for five years by default.

**Contract (dormant):** A fully executed Microdata Research Contract (MRC) with complete security clearances and available data that has been put on hold for a minimum of six months.

**Contract year:** The period of one year, starting on the date the Microdata Research Contract becomes active – see Contract (active).

**Data access (RDC on-site):** This is the mechanism of access that occurs in-person in a Statistics Canada Secure Room at a CRDCN Collaborating Institution. This is mandatory for highly sensitive data files, but projects at any sensitivity level can be conducted in-person at a Research Data Centre.

**Data access (remote):** Remote data access is conducted through a secure connection and requires the user to provide their own hardware. Remote data access is not available for projects using highly sensitive data files.

**Data Access Liaison:** The Data Access Liaison is an employee at a Collaborating Institution who is responsible for facilitating access to Protected Information, in accordance with the IIA.

**Delegate:** An employee at a Collaborating Institution who is responsible for assisting the Data Access Liaison with facilitating access to Protected Information, in accordance with the IIA.

**Employed:** In the categories of users, a user “employed” by a Collaborating Institution refers to an employment relationship between the user and the Collaborating Institution, as defined by the Collaborating Institution, and subject to its employment policies and collective agreements. For example, a courtesy or honorary appointment or work for a research or funding organization at arm’s length from the university would not be considered an employment relationship. For the purposes of applying this policy, someone with two or more employment relationships with different organizations would be considered as “employed” by the organization for whom they are doing the work through the Microdata Research Contract – see Contract (active).

**Inter-institutional Agreement (IIA):** An agreement between McMaster University (as lead institution for the CRDCN) and a Collaborating Institution that outlines financial contributions, the administration of funding and the relevant terms, conditions, responsibilities and policies.

**Microdata:** Any returns or identifying information obtained for the purposes of the *Statistics Act* (Statistics Canada Person-level information) that is protected under subsection 17(1) of the *Statistics Act* and excludes External Data.

**Other User Contract:** This is a fully executed Microdata Research Contract with a user not employed by a CRDCN Collaborating Institution.

**Protected Information:** The Microdata to which access is provided by Statistics Canada under the IIA and any Statistical Aggregates thereof that could directly or indirectly identify a person, all of which is protected under subsection 17(1) of the *Statistics Act*.

**Primary User Contract:** This is a fully executed Microdata Research Contract with a user who meets any of the following criteria: (1) The user is employed by a CRDCN Collaborating Institution doing self-directed academic work; (2) The user's project is directly funded by an agency providing collaborative research project support to CRDCN (including but not limited to CRDCN calls for proposals) and/or core financial support for the sustained research activities of the CRDCN (i.e. CIHR, SSHRC, CFI, FRQ) and Data Access Division at Statistics Canada; (3) The user is a professor emeritus affiliated with a Collaborating Institution or an agency providing core financial support to CRDCN (eligible for access only through an RDC lab unless approved for remote access by the institution's Data Access Liaison); or (4) The user is a student doing self-directed academic work for their degree program.

**Principal Investigator:** A Principal Investigator is the lead applicant on a Microdata Research Contract. The Principal Investigator should have an equal or superordinate role in research design and authorship to co-investigators and users who will co-author the final research product.

**Professor Emeritus:** A Professor Emeritus is defined as a former tenured professor (full or associate) who has retired from their university. The formal designation of professor emeritus does not need to have been granted by the university.

**Research conducted on behalf of a charitable or nonprofit organization:** This refers to research conducted by a user for which there are key deliverables, oversight, conditional funding, or an employment relationship between the user and a nonprofit organization (whether incorporated or not) or a charity registered with the Canada Revenue Agency. These organizations must be filing either a T3010 or T1044 with the Canada Revenue Agency.

**Research conducted on behalf of a government organization:** This refers to research for which there are key deliverables, oversight, conditional funding, or an employment relationship between the user and any division of a federal, regional, municipal, provincial, or territorial government.

**Research conducted on behalf of a private sector organization:** This refers to research for which there are key deliverables, oversight, conditional funding, or an employment relationship between the user and an organization not in the charitable/nonprofit, government, or academic sectors. Research conducted by a user working as a consultant or as part of a consulting firm on behalf of an organization in any sector is considered work done on behalf of a private sector organization.

**Research Data Centre (RDC):** An RDC is a designated Statistics Canada secure room from which users access data either directly or via the vRDC system.

**Secondary User Contract:** This is a fully executed Microdata Research Contract with a user employed by a CRDCN Collaborating Institution who meets any of the following criteria: (1) The user is doing self-directed academic work with data access at a Collaborating Institution, where the user's home institution does not have an RDC lab on their campus; (2) The user is conducting research on behalf of a charitable or nonprofit organization; The user is conducting research on behalf of government; or (3) The user is conducting research on behalf of the private sector (including industry associations).

**Self-directed academic work:** A research project for which the Principal Investigator (PI) has control over the research process from conception to the final draft of the report, meeting the following three criteria:

- The topic of the study is selected by the Principal Investigator (PI) in collaboration with Co-investigators. While the topic may be of interest to funders, funders do not direct the research question(s).
- The management of the research, including the selection of the appropriate research methodology and interpretation of the findings, is self-directed by the Principal Investigator. While funding partners may offer critical feedback in the process of peer review, the Principal Investigator does not have an obligation to make changes to the final research project as a condition of funding.
- The authorship remains with the Principal Investigator and Co-investigators. While the final research product may be shared with funders as a form of knowledge transfer, if the funders rewrite, publish or disseminate the findings, they would be required to cite the original research of the Principal Investigator.

**User – Research Data Centre:** A user in a Research Data Centre (RDC) is an individual authorized to work in the RDC (either remotely or in-person) or participate in the research with viewer status on an approved research contract.

**Viewer Status:** A deemed employee that is listed on the contract but does not have direct access to the data. A viewer can discuss protected information over the phone or view the data from within the same secure access point with another user authorized on this contract who is not a viewer. A Viewer will not be issued a login credential and will be unable to login to the vRDC system independently.

**vRDC:** The virtual Research Data Centre (vRDC) is the name of the infrastructure system that supports all RDC access including the remote connections to secure data available from within the RDC labs and the off-site remote access.

## Appendix 2 – Access instructions

Access to microdata through CRDCN involves the following steps:

- A. Application to the Microdata Access Portal (MAP)
- B. Security clearance
- C. Access and Fee-For-Service questionnaire

These steps are described in further detail below.

### A. Application to the Microdata Access Portal (MAP)

Access to the Research Data Centre infrastructure requires an application to the MAP. Potential users must create a MAP account and provide all required elements of the application including, but not limited to:

- a research proposal
- a list of Co-investigators
- a conflict-of-interest statement.

Additional requirement for untenured faculty: Peer-review letter (templated version available on the MAP).

Additional requirement for students: Supervisor letter (templated version available on the MAP).

### B. Security clearance

Once the application has been reviewed by the Statistics Canada Data Access Division and appropriate subject matter experts at Statistics Canada, the user will be required to have a valid security clearance before access to the data is granted. This requires a background check, fingerprinting and a credit history report. For users with a residential history outside of Canada, documentation related to the security clearance must be provided by the applicant at their cost and may need to be officially translated to English or French if not provided in that language.

### C. Access and Fee-For-Service questionnaire

In addition, all prospective users must complete an Access and Fee-For-Service questionnaire as part of their MAP application. This will be used to determine which fee model will apply to the contract. In cases where the fee is not payable by a Collaborating Institution, fees must be paid in full before access is granted.

Once all documentation and approvals have been satisfied, users will be contacted by their local Statistics Canada analyst to begin the onboarding process and to receive their login credentials. As part of onboarding, users become *deemed employees* of Statistics Canada, which permits them to access the data. This involves an oath of secrecy and an orientation process.

### Appendix 3 – Interim AFFS Approach Guidelines

In anticipation of the significant change from access in blocks of hours to fees for access on an annual basis, the CRDCN has developed interim guidelines to manage the transition to the revised AFFS policy for currently active fee-for-service projects. These guidelines are designed to address requests for additional Fee for Service (FFS) login hours and extensions and outline the approach to transitioning current contracts into the revised AFFS policy.

The principles underlying these guidelines: to provide an approach to the transition from the previous AFFS policy to the revised AFFS policy that is cost-efficient, streamlined and transparent, providing sustainable access and minimal administrative complexity for all parties.

#### Categories for AFFS contracts and approach:

Category	Contract Hours Remaining	Contract End Date	Approach
A	Various	On or before March 31, 2025	All existing FFS login hours must be used by March 31, 2025. The revised AFFS policy will be applied for all requests for extensions and / or additional FFS login hours,
B	Various	After March 31, 2025	All existing FFS login hours must be used by the contract's end date, or by March 31, 2026, whichever comes first. The revised AFFS policy will be applied for all requests for extensions and / or additional FFS login hours,



## Appendix 4 – CRDCN Collaborating Institutions and Core funders

Below is the list of organizations that have signed on as Collaborating Institutions with CRDCN by signing an Inter-Institutional Agreement. This list is dated 4 June 2024.

1. Carleton University
2. Dalhousie University
3. McGill University
4. McMaster University
5. Memorial University of Newfoundland
6. Nipissing University
7. Queen's University
8. Simon Fraser University
9. Université de Moncton
10. Université de Montréal
11. Université de Sherbrooke
12. Université du Québec à Montréal
13. Université Laval
14. University of Alberta
15. University of British Columbia
16. University of British Columbia: Okanagan
17. University of Calgary
18. University of Guelph
19. University of Lethbridge
20. University of Manitoba
21. University of New Brunswick
22. University of Northern British Columbia
23. University of Ottawa
24. University of Prince Edward Island
25. University of Regina
26. University of Saskatchewan
27. University of Toronto
28. University of Victoria
29. University of Waterloo
30. University of Windsor
31. Western University
32. York University

Below is a list of affiliates. Universities that are currently affiliates will be invited to join CRDCN as a Collaborating Institution in conjunction with the vRDC rollout, to ensure continued access to the data for their users. Institutions that choose not to join will become subject to the fee-for-service policy according to the category “other user contracts” (Table 3).

1. Brock University
2. St. Mary's University
3. St. Francis Xavier University
4. St. Thomas University
5. Concordia University
6. HEC Montréal

7. Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS)
8. Université du Québec
9. Toronto Metropolitan University
10. Wilfrid Laurier University
11. University of Winnipeg

CRDCN core funders:

1. Canada Foundation for Innovation
2. Canadian Institutes of Health Research
3. Fonds de Recherche du Québec
4. Social Science & Humanities Research Council
5. Statistics Canada (for work related to data development or researcher support)

## Appendix 5 – Access and Fee-For-Service flow chart

Note that this flowchart represents a very simplified version of the process of determining whether a project will be subject to fees. It covers the vast majority of cases but doesn't capture all cases. The flowchart does not supersede anything in the text of the policy.

