Canadian Research Data Centre Network

Terms of Reference for the Academic Council

Version: 20 May 2026

1.0 Role and Responsibilities

1.1 The fundamental purpose of the Academic Council ("the AC") shall be to support the CRDCN Board ("the Board") in the protection and enhancement of the value of the assets of the Canadian Research Data Centre Network ("CRDCN" or "the Network").

1.2 The primary role of the AC shall be to provide advice and recommendations to the Board on behalf of its collaborating institutions with a focus, at the local and national level, on:

a) the promotion, development and support of the Network's research activities, programs and infrastructure;

b) the training of the next generation of highly qualified personnel; and

c) cross-sectoral knowledge mobilization and public policy impact.

1.3 In providing this advice and these recommendations to the Board, members of the AC shall seek to:

a) be effective conduits of communication between their respective institutions, research communities, the Network and Statistics Canada;

b) share their insights and expertise regarding the local relevance, suitability and feasibility of research, training and knowledge mobilization programs and services offered by or envisaged by the Network or Statistics Canada;

c) identify and help pursue sources of funding, research initiatives and collaborative partnerships to heighten the impact and reach of the Network;

d) be champions of the Network on their campuses and help promote the Network nationally and internationally; and

e) bring to the attention of the Board as warranted, other issues relating to the management, financial sustainability, and standards of conduct for the Network.

1.4 To assist the Academic Council in the fulfillment of its role and responsibilities, the AC will appoint two to six members to CRDCN's Joint Operations Committee and periodically recommend to the JOC consideration of specific operational and technical issues to ensure the effective functioning of the Network.

2.0 Membership and procedures

2.1 Each of CRDCN's Academic Directors shall sit on the Academic Council.

2.2 The Executive Director of CRDCN, by virtue of their office, shall be a standing, non-voting member of the AC.

2.3 Two Statistics Canada staff members who have responsibility and accountability for the management of the Research Data Centre (RDC) program, shall be granted observer status on the AC. The Board and/or AC may invite one or more additional staff members from Statistics Canada to participate in the AC as observers.

2.4 The Chair of the Board shall be granted observer status at all meetings of the AC. Other members of the Board may be granted observer status as warranted, from time to time.

2.5 The length of the term of each Academic Director shall be determined by the institution making the appointment, with due consideration to the Institutional Recommendations for the Appointment and Support of CRDCN Academic Directors. Should the position of Academic Director at a given institution be temporarily vacant or should there be other circumstances that prevent the participation of an Academic Director from a given institution, another representative may be chosen by the institution in question to attend in their stead.

2.6 While recommendations that the AC wishes to make to the Board shall be carried by the majority of votes, the AC shall seek, where feasible, to promote collegiality and consensus-building in determining these recommendations. The Chair of the AC or, in their absence, the Vice-Chair of the AC presiding at any meeting of the AC shall have the deciding vote in the case of deadlock. Recommendations of the AC shall be communicated to the Board by the Chair of the AC to inform the Board's deliberations and decision-making processes.

2.7 AC members shall endeavor to attend all AC meetings to ensure continuity of the group.

2.8 No remuneration shall be received by the members except reimbursement of travel expenses pursuant to the reimbursement policies of their own institutions and that of McMaster as the host institution.

3.0 Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary

3.1 *Chair*

3.1.1 The AC shall be chaired by one of the voting members who sits on the AC as nominated by the CRDCN Board in consultation with the Academic Council.

3.1.2 The Chair of the AC shall be appointed for a two- to three-year term and may be reappointed by the CRDCN Board, for one consecutive two- to three-year term.

3.2 *Vice-Chair*

3.2.1 The Vice-Chair of the AC shall be appointed for a two - to three-year term, and may be reappointed by the CRDCN Board, for one consecutive two- to three-year term. The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair as may be necessary and, in the absence of the Chair or the inability of the Chair to act, shall exercise the powers and duties of the Chair. Candidates for the Vice-Chair shall be considered from among the voting members who sit on the AC as nominated by the CRDCN Board in consultation with the Academic Council.

3.2.2 If the Chair of the AC is not present at a meeting of the AC, the Vice-Chair shall chair the meeting. If neither of the former is present, the AC shall choose a Chair from among the voting members present at the meeting.

3.3 *Secretary*

3.3.1 CRDCN's Executive Director shall designate a CRDCN central staff person or an external resource to serve as secretary to the AC.

3.3.2 The person designated to act as secretary to the AC shall be responsible for the following duties:

- organize and record the activities of the AC and committee meetings;
- ensure that the AC complies with any requirements of the Board to which it reports;
- keep and maintain all organizational and historical records; facilitate the orientation and ongoing education of AC members; and
- act as a channel of communication and information for AC members.

4.0 Meetings, attendance, and minutes

4.1 The time and place of meetings of the AC and the procedures at such meetings shall be determined from time to time by the Chair in consultation with the AC, the Board and Network management, provided that:

- the AC hold a minimum of one meeting per year;
- notice of face-to-face meetings be delivered to each AC member not less than 21 days) days before the meeting is to take place, provided, however, that an AC member may in any manner waive a notice of a meeting;
- notice of meetings be delivered to each AC member not less than 7 days before the meeting is to take place, provided, however, that an AC member may in any manner waive a notice of a meeting;
- an agenda and related materials respecting each meeting be delivered to each AC member at least 48 hours prior to the time fixed for such meeting;
- a quorum for meetings be a majority of the AC voting members then holding office; and
- at all meetings of the AC and any committees of the AC every question be decided by a majority of the votes cast on the question. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair or, in their absence, the Vice-Chair, shall have the deciding vote. An AC member shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting by proxy.

4.2 The person designated to serve as secretary to the AC shall ensure that all deliberations and recommendations of the AC are recorded in the summary of the meetings of the AC. A report of these meetings shall be shared with the EC to inform their deliberations and decision-making.

5.0 Communication of AC recommendations and advice to the Board and other stakeholders

5.1 The Executive Director shall ensure that the AC's key discussions, advice and recommendations are adequately disclosed to the Board, the Network's management and key stakeholders.

5.2 The Executive Director shall also ensure public disclosure of the Network's governance practices, including the terms of reference for the AC.

These Terms were first adopted by the National Council of Academic Directors in November 2016, and last reviewed and approved by the CRDCN Board on 20 May 2026.