

Frequently Asked Questions on the Fonds de recherche du Québec's (FRQ) Self-Identification Questionnaire

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1. Why did the FRQ introduce a self-identification questionnaire?

In their 2018-2022 strategic plans, the Fonds¹ committed to strengthening equity, diversity and inclusion in research. The collection of sociodemographic data on applicants, funding recipients and reviewers is one of the measures put in place with this goal in mind, in accordance with the *Politique sur la collecte de données sociodémographiques visant à planifier des mesures en matière d'équité, de diversité et d'inclusion*, adopted by the boards of directors of the Fonds in April 2021 and the [FRQ's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#), launched in summer 2021. The statistics that will be generated from this data will allow the FRQ to detect potentially inequitable situations and to plan and monitor the impact of any improvement measures.

2. Who is required to complete the self-identification questionnaire?

The self-identification questionnaire **must be completed by all applicants (including co-investigators), funding recipients, and individuals involved in the evaluation of applications** submitted to FRQ funding programs. This section must be completed in order to submit an application, access a funding decision or submit an evaluation report.

The questionnaire **should not be completed by** institutional users (e.g., institutions' administrative or financial departments), respondents, directors, supervisors and FRQ staff. These individuals must still access the questionnaire to indicate that they are not a candidate or awardee, or a member of an evaluation committee, and then save their answer.

3. How will the data collected from applicants be used?

The information provided by applicants and funding recipients allows the FRQ to analyze the representation of historically discriminated groups among eligible, recommended and funded applications for its programs. In addition, the success rates of individuals from these groups will be compared to those of other applicants. The FRQ uses these data in planning and monitoring actions to address any inequities.

The information provided by applicants **will not impact the eligibility or evaluation of their application or any funding decisions**.

¹ In 2018 and when the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was launched, the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Nature et technologies, the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Santé and the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture were three separate agencies, each with its own board of directors. Since June 1st 2024, they are grouped together as a single agency: the Fonds de recherche du Québec.

4. How will the data collected from reviewers be used?

To enhance the equity of the evaluation process, FRQ staff strive each year to form diverse evaluation committees, taking multiple variables into account. The proportion of women reviewers has been calculated and reported annually by the FRQ for several years. The information provided by reviewers will provides the FRQ with data on the representation of other historically discriminated groups in its committees for the purpose of continuous improvement.

5. Will my answers affect the eligibility of my application?

No, your responses to the self-identification questionnaire **will not impact the eligibility of your application**. Individuals involved in program management, including those who assess the eligibility of applications, do not have access to information provided in the self-identification questionnaire.

Therefore, if any of the information provided in the questionnaire is required to determine the eligibility of your application or to request special considerations, it must also be provided in your application or when communicating with the program team.

6. Will my answers affect the evaluation of my application or funding decisions?

No, your responses to the self-identification questionnaire will **not impact the evaluation of your application or any funding decisions**. Individuals involved in program management and reviewers do not have access to information provided in the self-identification questionnaire.

Therefore, if any of the information provided in the questionnaire is required to evaluate your application or to request special considerations, it must also be provided in your application or when communicating with the program team.

7. Is the self-identification questionnaire mandatory? What can I do if I do not want to answer the questions?

The questionnaire must be completed and submitted by all applicants, funding recipients and reviewers to complete their profile in FRQnet. However, for each question, **you have the option to choose “I prefer not to answer”**. Doing so will not impact the processing of your file or funding application.

For more information on who must complete the questionnaire, please refer to the section [Who is required to complete the self-identification questionnaire?](#)

8. How will my personal information be protected by the FRQ? Who will have access to it?

The information provided in response to this questionnaire will remain confidential in accordance with the [Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information](#), CQLR, c. A-2.1, the [Statement regarding the protection of personal and confidential information](#) and the terms described below. In addition, given their sensitive nature, the management and dissemination of these data are governed by a specific directive (*Directive sur la gestion des données du questionnaire d'auto-identification*), as well as by confidentiality control rules developed in collaboration with Statistics Canada.

Stored with enhanced security measures, the data collected will be stored in restricted access directories on the FRQ's secure servers. Personal information will not be accessible to FRQ staff. As a trusted third party, an external firm is responsible for the security of the database where the source data is kept and for its de-identification².

Access to de-identified personal information will be limited to a small number of duly authorised FRQ staff members of the directions of Planning and performance and Ethics and legal affairs, including the staff responsible for retrieving the information and the equity, diversity and inclusion advisor, who will process and analyze the data confidentially. The Scientific Director of each sector (Nature et technologies, Santé, Société et culture) will have access to de-identified personal information, to rely on a sufficiently detailed socio-demographic profile to make decisions regarding possible improvement measures, if necessary.

Except for the staff members mentioned in the previous paragraph, the personal information will not be accessible to FRQ staff (e.g., those processing funding applications), or to reviewers, or to other individuals outside the FRQ who have access to your FRQnet profile (e.g., managing institutions, directors, respondents, supervisors, co-investigators, etc.). Once anonymized and aggregated, the data may be shared in statistical form with FRQ staff or made public. It will not be possible to identify you from this data.

For more information, you may contact the person responsible for access to information and the protection of personal information at the FRQ: responsableacc@frq.gouv.qc.ca.

² « Personal information is de-identified if it no longer allows the person concerned to be directly identified » (Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information, RLRQ, c. A-2.1)

9. What is the procedure for completing the questionnaire?

If you have already completed and saved the self-identification questionnaire: Please refer to the section [How do I view or change my answers after submitting the questionnaire?](#)

If you have never completed the self-identification questionnaire: The next time you log on to the new FRQnet platform, you will be able to access the self-identification questionnaire in your user account.³

Applicants, funding recipients and reviewers must answer all the questions, and then save the completed questionnaire. For each question, you can choose the option “I prefer not to answer” if this is the case.

Once the questionnaire has been saved, the date of the last update will be indicated.

Institutional users and other users who are not required to fill out the questionnaire (see section [Who is required to complete the self-identification questionnaire?](#)) need only answer the first question to confirm their role, and save their answer without completing the questionnaire.

10. How do I view or change my answers after submitting the questionnaire?

You can view or change your self-identification information at any time in the new FRQnet platform, by selecting the “Self-Identification questionnaire” tab in your user account. If you change your answers, you must then save and validate the questionnaire. Once the questionnaire has been saved, the date of the last update will be modified.

11. How were the questions, categories and terminology chosen?

The questions, classifications and terminology are primarily based on Québec and federal legislation, current classification standards and the self-identification questionnaires used by the federal granting agencies and the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse. The data collected in the questionnaire must be comparable with reliable population data. Therefore, Statistics Canada’s classification and terminology is used in several questions.

The questions chosen allow for the identification of people belonging to four of the groups targeted by the Québec [Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies](#) (RLRQ,

³ People using the original FRQnet platform will be automatically redirected to the new platform if they have to complete the self-identification questionnaire.

c. A-2.01): Indigenous people, disabled people, and members of visible or ethnic minorities. The Act also targets women, but gender data is collected directly in the *My Profile* section of the FRQnet user account and not in the self-identification questionnaire (see [Why does the self-identification questionnaire not contain a question on gender?](#)). That said, many other groups face obstacles or situations of exclusion and discrimination. While the data collection is restricted to the groups targeted by the Act, the FRQ's approach to diversity is not limited to these five groups (see the [FRQ's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) for more information).

It should be noted that some terms used in the questionnaire are not universally agreed upon and that standards and practices continue to evolve. As a result, the classifications and terminology may change and additional questions may be added in the coming years. To provide feedback, please refer to the section [Who can I contact for more information or to provide feedback on the questionnaire?](#)

12. What information is requested in the questionnaire?

The questionnaire collects information on identification with four groups targeted by the Québec's [Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies](#) (RLRQ, c. A-2.01) : Indigenous people, disabled people, and members of visible or ethnic minorities. The term “ethnic minority” refers to persons whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, and who are neither Indigenous nor members of a visible minority. There is no specific question on belonging to an ethnic minority, as this is determined by combining the answers to questions 1, 2 and 4.

In this section, you will find details about the information requested for each of the questions included in the self-identification questionnaire. For more information on the choice of questions, please refer to the section [How were the questions, categories and terminology chosen?](#)

Question 1. Do you identify as an Indigenous person of Canada (First Nations, Inuit or Métis)?

This question is about Indigenous identity. It concerns personal identity, not legal status or registration. It seeks to determine whether the respondent identifies as an Indigenous person.

Question 2. Do you identify as a member of a visible minority group in Canada?

This question is about belonging to groups identified as “visible minorities” in Canada. According to the [Employment Equity Act](#) (L.C., 1995, Ch. 44), “members of visible minorities means persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour”.

The vocabulary used by Statistics Canada is used in the self-identification questionnaire so that our data can be compared with population data. However, it does not correspond to the vocabulary typically used by the FRQ, which favours the concept of "racialized group" over "visible minority".⁴ Moreover, it is important to point out that, "far from corresponding to an objective reality, the concept of "race" refers to an essentializing and stigmatizing category applied by the majority group to minorities that were formerly colonized or subject to slavery".⁵

Question 3. Which of the following population group(s), defined by Statistics Canada, do you identify with?

This question seeks to determine the demographic group(s) with which the respondent identifies. It is not concerned with citizenship or nationality. Respondents may select all population groups that apply.

The classification and terminology used are those defined by Statistics Canada; there is no comparable classification in Québec. For more information on this topic, please refer to the section [How were the questions, categories and terminology chosen?](#)

Respondents who answered "Yes" to Question 1 on Indigenous identity or who are part of an Indigenous group from outside of Canada should select "Other". In both cases, respondents should also indicate any additional population group(s) with which they identify.

Question 4. What language did you first learn at home in childhood and still understand?

This question, combined with Questions 1 and 2, will be used to determine whether respondents belong to an ethnic minority. The term "ethnic minority" refers to persons whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, and who are neither Indigenous nor members of a visible minority. Members of ethnic minorities are included in the groups targeted by the Québec [Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies](#) (RLRQ, c. A-2.01).

Question 5. Do you identify as person with a disability?

In Québec, according to the [Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights with a view to achieving social, school and workplace integration](#) (CQLR, c. E-20.1, a. 1), a "handicapped person" is "a person with a deficiency causing a significant and persistent disability, who is liable to encounter barriers in performing everyday activities".

⁴ The *Employment Equity Act* Review Task Force suggests in its report A Transformative Framework to Achieve and Sustain Employment Equity that the term "visible minorities" be replaced by "racialized workers."

⁵ Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse : [Racial profiling and systemic discrimination of racialized youth](#) (2011), note 4, p. 9.

According to the [Office des personnes handicapées du Québec](#), a disability may be motor, intellectual, visual, auditory, or linked to other senses, to speech or language, to organic functions, to an autism spectrum disorder or to a severe mental health disorder.

It should be noted that Québec law defines disability differently than the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (L.C., 2019, ch. 10), which includes a wider range of disabilities. As a result, the data collected by the FRQ regarding disabilities may not be directly comparable to that collected by the federal agencies.

13. Why does the self-identification questionnaire not contain a question on gender?

Until July 2024, the questionnaire contained a question on gender. However, due to the high level of confidentiality applied to the self-identification questionnaire data, the data thus collected did not enable the FRQ to meet all its needs in terms of tracking and disseminating gender data, including government reporting requirements.

Gender information is now collected directly in the *My Profile* section of the FRQnet platform, which allows for the application of a more appropriate consent.

To avoid confusion between the two data sources, the question on gender was therefore removed from the self-identification questionnaire.

14. Is this questionnaire different from the one used by the federal granting agencies?

The federal granting agencies use self-identification questionnaires to collect sociodemographic data from individuals applying for funding under their programs. The FRQ's questionnaire is based on these questionnaires, while taking into account the specificities of Québec legislation.

15. Who can I contact for more information or to provide feedback on the questionnaire?

For technical support, please send an email to the FRQ's IT support centre at centre.assistance@frq.gouv.qc.ca.

For information concerning access to information and the protection of personal information, please contact the person responsible at responsableacc@frq.gouv.qc.ca.

For any other information or to provide feedback on the self-identification questionnaire, please contact us at edi@frq.gouv.qc.ca.