



TERMS OF REFERENCE

ACENET RESEARCH DIRECTORATE

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1. Definitions

Definitions are provided in the ACENET Consortium Constitution.

2. Purpose

The ACENET Research Directorate (RD) is a researcher-led committee that provides advice and makes recommendations on digital research infrastructure (DRI) needs and perspectives to the ACENET Board of Directors (Board), ACENET staff, and other stakeholders. The RD serves to generate and advise on ACENET initiatives and facilitates engagement with the broader research community in Atlantic Canada. The RD supports a researcher-centric culture of service to, and engagement with, researchers.

Though the RD is an advisory committee, on occasion, it may explicitly be delegated decision making authority by the CEO or Board Chair on a particular matter.

3. Composition

3.1. Membership

The RD is composed of a minimum 7 and maximum 12 members. Of these:

- 7 shall be faculty members from each of ACENET’s Major Resource Providers (Dal, SMU, StFX, MUN, UNB, UdeMoncton, UPEI), and
- Remaining members can be selected from faculty, librarians, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, or staff at any ACENET member institution.

Membership composition will aim to balance representation across several dimensions, including

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion principles
- ACENET member institutions
- Research disciplines
- Expertise in Digital Research Infrastructure areas of Advanced Research Computing, Research Data Management, and Research Software and experience in industry engagement
- Early to late career spectrum

Recognizing the value of strong linkages between the RD and the Digital Research Alliance of Canada's Researcher Council, any Atlantic Canadian researcher serving on this Council will be invited to attend RD meetings and may also be invited to fill any vacancies on the RD.

The process for soliciting nominations shall be determined by the RD. RD membership is approved by the Board.

3.2. Leadership

RD meetings are chaired on a rotating basis with all members participating as they are able. The member currently chairing an RD meeting is referred to as the RoChair. The order and period of selection is determined by the RD.

The RoChair is responsible for

- Soliciting agenda items and preparing the agenda
- Chairing the meeting and ensuring meeting minutes are taken and are accurate
- Ensuring members are aware of any resulting action items
- Ensuring a RoChair is selected for the next meeting

One member of the RD also serves as the Board Liaison. The member to fill this role and a suggested appointment term is proposed by the RD and approved by the Board.

The Board Liaison is responsible for

- Attending meetings of the ACENET Board of Directors (in a non-voting capacity, unless otherwise appointed by the Board)
- Delivering a report on RD activities at each Board meeting
- Offering updates from the Board to the RD
- Acting as liaison between the RD and the Board, providing RD advice and perspective as appropriate, and updating the RD on Board activities and direction

4. Term

RD members will be appointed for two-year terms with a consecutive 3 term maximum. Where possible, the terms of the members will be staggered with the aim that no more than one-third of members are replaced or renewed in a given year.

In the event that a member cannot complete their term, the position may be filled at the discretion of the Board. In the event of a member taking leave, the member will determine if they want to step down from the committee, return at the end of their leave, or continue on the committee during their leave.

5. Meetings

The RD typically meets monthly, more frequently in times of heightened activity, and not less than 6 times per year. Meetings can be held at any time and place as determined by the members, provided a one-week notice of such meeting is given to each member of the council. Meetings may be held by teleconference or videoconference, or in person, as deemed appropriate by the RoChair.

ACENET Executive staff attend meetings in a non-voting capacity, with other staff invited from time to time on an as-needed basis.

Minutes of meetings shall be kept with ACENET staff support, and will be available to the Board, future Research Directorates, and management.

5.1. Decision-Making

The RoChair shall preside at all meetings of the council. The RD will adopt a consensus approach wherever possible in all matters. Where this is not possible and a decision is required, this shall be done by simple majority vote of members in attendance. In the event of a vote that results in a tie, the RoChair shall have the right to execute a second, tie-breaking, vote.

The quorum for formal decision making at any meeting will be a simple majority of the membership.

6. Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Research Directorate are as follows

- Ensure that a diversity of researcher voices is represented to the Board and/or management to ensure that researcher needs inform strategic plans, activities and work planning.
- Provide strategic advice and recommendations to the Board and/or management as requested.

- Develop outreach processes to engage researchers across disciplines and institutions to ensure that researcher feedback is provided to ACENET management.
- Establish and oversee, with the support of ACENET management, working groups or subcommittees to address specific issues and questions.
- Provide input to the Digital Research Alliance of Canada Researcher Council when such input is sought by the Alliance or requested by ACENET management.
- Maintain a culture of service to, and engagement with, researchers.

7. Accountability

The RD is an advisory body that acts at the discretion of the Board. The RD is also accountable to the Atlantic Canadian research community.

8. Support

Administrative support of the RD will be provided by ACENET staff. The RD’s work may also be supported by specialized sub-committees, working groups, and other external expertise that may be established or called-upon from time to time as necessary.

9. Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed, modified as required, and renewed on an annual basis by the Board. In addition, requests for modifications to the Terms of Reference may be made by the Board Liaison to the Board at any time.

10. Document Change History

Version	Date	Modification
1	December 3, 2021	Original stand-alone RD ToR
1.1	January 25, 2024	Updated to include Université de Moncton and remove necessity of ACENET annual town hall meeting