



University of Northern British Columbia UNBC Ready: Research Roadmap (2025-2030)

Major Objectives of the UNBC Ready: Research Roadmap (2025-2030)

The **UNBC Ready: Research Roadmap (2025-2030)** is guided by UNBC's Strategic Plan, **READY**. UNBC's researchers aim to advance knowledge, promote sustainability, and ignite, inspire, and lead change at the local and global level. Our mission is to build a sustainable and empowered future by cultivating curiosity, acting on truth and reconciliation, empowering northern communities, and fostering local solutions for global impact. Our vision is to advance knowledge, inspire discovery, and empower tomorrow.

Core priority action areas:

- Strengthen, sustain and grow research capacity at UNBC
- Manage and enhance research resources at UNBC
- Attract, retain, and develop outstanding faculty
- Enhance research experiences for students and trainees
- Build, grow, and sustain research partnerships
- Foster knowledge mobilization

Priority Areas for Research and Research Training

UNBC has gained national recognition for research performance, especially in key areas of importance to the wellbeing of northerners. We value and encourage research and scholarly activity that is locally motivated and relevant yet has global effect and recognition. This refreshed strategic research plan reaffirms UNBC's founding principles through its commitment to five interdisciplinary and interconnected areas of scholarly inquiry:

- Indigenous Peoples, Place, and Leadership
- Climate Action, Sustainable Environments, and Natural Resources
- Northern and Rural Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Health, Society, and Wellbeing
- Science and Technology

How UNBC proposes to address the issue of gender representation in CRC nominations and to monitor its progress in addressing this issue

All Canada Research Chairholder recruitment and nomination processes at UNBC strictly adhere to the Canada Research Chairs recruitment requirements. Safeguards to ensure these processes are open and transparent and are built into UNBC policies and procedures, as well as the UNBC Faculty Collective Agreement (2023-2025).

Gender representation in CRC nominations at UNBC will be addressed through the following:

- The allocation of CRCs is managed by an interdisciplinary committee. The committee will ensure alignment with gender representation requirements;
- Safeguards, such as a revised Equity in Employment policy, procedures outlined in the UNBC Faculty Collective Agreement (2023-2025), and mandatory training for the hiring committee, have been put in place to ensure recruitment practices are open and transparent and that the four designated groups (racialized individuals, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, women and gender equity-seeking groups) are not disadvantaged; and
- Training and development activities related to unconscious bias, equity, diversity, and inclusion for administrators and faculty who are involved in the recruitment and nomination process for chair positions have, and will continue to, take place

UNBC will monitor its progress in addressing this issue through the collection of self-identification data from applicants when they apply for positions.

Areas of research in which UNBC intends to deploy Chairs and/or Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) support

Area of Research	Tier 1 CRC	Tier 2 CRC	CERC	CFI Support*
Natural Sciences and Engineering	0	2	0	Yes
Social Sciences and Humanities	0	2	0	Yes
Health	0	0	1	Yes

*UNBC currently has an open internal call for applications for both the upcoming CFI John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF) and CFI Innovation Fund competitions. Specific areas of CFI support are yet to be determined.

What UNBC has done to develop research and research training in these areas and its plans for any new areas of research it intends to develop

UNBC has invested, with financial support from CFI and the British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund (BCKDF), among others, in significant physical infrastructure to support research and enrich its research environment.

The following physical resources are in place to support the research programs of UNBC researchers and provide world-class training opportunities for UNBC students that enhance their research experience and technical skills and knowledge, leading to the development of the next generation of research leaders.

Lab Facilities

- Genetics Lab
- GIS and Remote Sensing Lab
- IK Barber Enhanced Forestry Lab
- High Performance Computing Lab
- Northern Analytical Laboratory Services
- Tree Ring Lab
- Wood Innovation Research Lab

Research Forests and Centres

- Aleza Lake Research Forest
- John Prince Research Forest
- Dr. Max Blouw Quesnel River Research Centre

Collections and Data Centres

- UNBC Library
- Northern BC Archives & Special Collections
- Research Data Centre

Institutes and Centres

- Community Development Institute
- Health Research Institute
- National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health
- Natural Resources & Environmental Studies Institute
- Northern Centre for Clinical Research
- Northern Hub for Health Research
- Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions
- Women North Network/Northern Feminist Institute for Research and Evaluation (FIRE)
- Community Scholars Program
- Spark Lab

Research training at UNBC is further enhanced through the following:

- Research Ambassador program that has enhanced awareness of, and interest in, research;
- Undergraduate Research Experience Awards that provide funding for undergraduate students to engage and be mentored in a faculty member's research;
- Graduate Scholarships, and travel funding for graduate students to attend conferences to present their work; and
- Postdoctoral Fellows are supported through the Office of Research and Innovation, internal funding opportunities, and grant development workshops.

Within each strategic research area (identified above), UNBC has identified key areas of research, as well as emerging themes. UNBC is committed to these areas of inquiry as they are of critical importance to the region, as well as to Canada and globally.

Planned inter-institutional and inter-sectoral collaborations

UNBC has formally established several inter-institutional collaborations and memorandum of understandings (MOUs), these include:

UNBC/Northern Health

UNBC and NH signed a facilitating MOU on June 22, 2010. The MOU was subsequently renewed on December 5, 2016, and again on Nov. 1, 2018. The current MOU (signed July 11, 2022) renews and builds upon these earlier commitments in recognition of past achievements and new contexts, opportunities and challenges. All these MOUs reflect a shared commitment to furthering knowledge about, and developing the capacity for, the advancement of the health of northern British Columbians through the integration of practice, education and research.

Provincial Health Services Authority/Northern Health/UNBC

The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), Northern Health (NH) and UNBC entered into a MOU on November 12, 2013. The MOU was renewed on March 13, 2025. The aim of the current MOU is to collaborate in establishing a mutually beneficial research partnership for northern BC. The UNBC Health Research Institute (HRI) serves as the Secretariat to support PHSA, NH and UNBC in their commitment to enhance research collaboration between the three organizations.

UNBC/ University of Central Asia

UNBC and the University of Central Asia (UCA) signed a MOU (in 2021) to facilitate student and faculty exchanges between the two institutions and increased opportunities to collaborate on joint research projects.

UNBC/Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto and UNBC have signed an MOU that will further research programs across the North, while also providing unique experiential learning opportunities for UNBC students.

Michael Smith Health Research BC (MSHRBC) – previously BCAHSN

Michael Smith Health Research BC is British Columbia’s health research agency. Launched in 2021, Health Research BC brings together the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) and the BC Academic Health Science Network (BC AHSN). We are working towards a future where BC is recognized worldwide for its vibrant, coherent, inclusive, and globally competitive health research system, which improves the health of British Columbians, the health system, and the economy.

MSHRBC enables research in many ways and UNBC researchers can access a number of supports through MSHRBC agencies, including through:

- BC SUPPORT Unit
- Clinical Trials BC
- Research Ethics BC
- Knowledge Translation

How UNBC will assess its success in meeting its objectives

The Office of Research and Innovation annually evaluates its progress toward meeting these objectives, and the Vice President Research and Innovation reports regularly to UNBC’s Senate and Board of Governors on research activities and progress on the plan.

UNBCs planning and approval process. Involvement of affiliated institutions

UNBC’s Ready: Research Roadmap (2025-2030) was developed in broad consultation with UNBC community members and partners through engagement sessions, interviews, focus groups, surveys, and more. The revised and refreshed plan sets out a collective vision and plan for research and innovation for 2025-2030 and beyond. The new plan serves as a roadmap, setting out our goals and priority areas over the coming five years.

The renewal of UNBC’s Strategic Research Plan occurred alongside the renewal of the UNBC Academic Plan, and both build upon UNBC’s Strategic Plan, READY. A Strategic Research Plan Advisory Committee comprised of faculty and administrative staff provided direction, guidance, and oversight on the engagement process. The team worked with a consultant to develop the framework and plan. The plan was presented to the UNBC Senate for consideration and endorsement and then to the UNBC Board of Governors for final approval.

Affiliated Institutions

- Northern Health
- Michael Smith Health Research BC