

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TOOLKIT FOR RESEARCH AND RESEARCHERS

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Glossary of Terms

Diversity: Differences in race, colour, place of origin, religion, immigrant and newcomer status, ethnic origin, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, perspective and lived experiences.

Equity: The quality of being fair and impartial. It involves treating every person according to their needs and differences, which, as a pre-requisite, needs awareness of the systemic barriers faced by individuals.

Four Designated Groups (FDGs) / Under-Represented Groups (URGs) / Equity Seeking Groups (ESGs) / Equity Deserving Groups (EDGs): The underrepresented groups include those who face obstacles, including but not limited to women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority/racialized groups, and members of the LGBTQ2+ communities¹ Equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives may focus on, but should not be limited to these groups and may consider equity based on other categories such as sexual or gender identity, age, parental status, etc.

Gender: The socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men and people with diverse gender identities. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society. Gender is often conceptualized as a binary (girl/woman and boy/man), but there is considerable diversity in how individuals and groups understand, experience and express it, including non-gendered, non-binary and transgendered.

Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP): This refers to research trainees such as undergraduate and graduate (Master's and PhD) students, research assistants, and postdoctoral fellows.

Inclusion: Diverse backgrounds being valued in a group or by the institution which as a pre-requisite needs awareness about differences and privileges.

LGBTQ2SIA+: The acronym used for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Two-Spirited, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic, + many other gender identities and sexual orientations.

Microaggression: Brief and common verbal, behavioural or institutional actions that play into stereotypes or discrimination against a group of people, often under-represented groups. Members of under-represented groups often experience the same microaggression repeatedly over time, producing adverse emotional, social, psychological and health impacts, which can also affect their level of productivity and sense of inclusion at work. Examples of microaggression include implying a member of an under-represented group is an "equity hire,;" asking where someone is "really from,;" downplaying the effects of race, gender, ability, etc. on lived experiences; implying that someone's reaction is due to sensitivity, not the nature of the situation they are in; etc.

Non-Gendered Language: The use of terms that avoid the use of any gender terms. For example, instead of saying "fireman", the use of firefighter would be more inclusive and unbiased towards any particular gender.

Sex: A set of biological attributes in humans and animals. It is primarily associated with physical and physiological features, including chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and function, and reproductively/sexual anatomy. Sex is usually categorized as female or male but there is variation in the biological attributes that comprise sex and how those attributes are expressed.

¹ Government of Canada 2019, Dimensions: equity, diversity and inclusion Canada, accessed October 2022, http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/EDI-EDI/Dimensions-Charter_Dimensions-Charte_eng.asp

Sex and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+): An analytical process used to assess the potential impacts of policies, programs, services, and other initiatives on diverse groups of women, men and people with diverse gender identities, considering multiple identity factors. This approach systematically examines sex-based (biological) and gender-based (socio-cultural) differences between men, women, boys, girls and people with diverse gender identities. The “plus” highlights that the analysis goes beyond sex and gender and includes the examination of a range of intersecting identity factors (such as age, education, sexual orientation, parental status/responsibility, immigration status, Indigenous status, religion, disability, language, race, place of origin, ethnicity, culture and socio-economic status). Sex and gender (and multiple intersecting identity factors) can influence all stages of research or development processes, from considerations for establishing priorities and building theory to formulating questions, designing methodologies, and interpreting data. Thus, the purpose of SGBA+ is to promote rigorous research that considers identity factors so that the results are impactful and relevant to the diversity of the Canadian population.

Systemic Barriers: The policies, procedures, or practices that result from individuals from EDGs receiving unequal access to or being excluded from participating in employment, services, or programs.

Tokenism: Any practice that selects an individual for an opportunity based on their identity and not on the merits of their expertise or field of study. The New Frontiers Research Fund further defines tokenism as *“the practice of doing something (such as hiring a person who belongs to a minority group) only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that people are be treated fairly”*.

Unconscious Bias: An implicit attitude, stereotype, motivation, or assumption that can occur without one’s knowledge, control, or intention. Unconscious bias is a result of one’s life experiences and affects all types of people. Everyone carries implicit or unconscious biases. Examples of unconscious bias include gender bias, cultural bias, race/ethnicity bias, age bias, language and institutional bias. Decisions made based on unconscious bias can compound over time to significantly impact the lives and opportunities of others who are affected by the decisions one makes.

Introduction

As Canada's population continues to diversify, it is essential that Canadian researchers consider how their research impacts diverse populations, including its impact on equity-deserving groups (EDGs) such as women, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, persons from visible minorities, and persons from sexual and gender minorities. The three federal research funding agencies, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), known as the Tri-Agencies, have expressed a commitment to research excellence, which includes incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles into their policies, processes, and assessment criteria. As such, have released the [Tri-Agency EDI Action Plan \(2018-2025\)](#). This is an important document to review before drafting your individual EDI plan. Other important documentation to be familiar with are the [Tri-Agency Dimensions Charter](#) and the [Tri-Agency DORA declaration](#). By reviewing these documents, you will gain a better understanding of EDI in the research environment and how the Agencies are implementing EDI best practices within their domains.

The purpose of this toolkit is to assist researchers at Lakehead University with incorporating the principles of EDI into their research. Moreover, it aims to provide researchers with information on the requirements of federal research funding agencies for incorporating EDI into research. Additional information about Lakehead University's institutional EDI strategies can be found in the [Lakehead University CRC EDI Institutional Action Plan](#), [Lakehead University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan \(2019-2024\)](#) and by attending workshops put on by the EDI Research Facilitator throughout the year.

In addition to this toolkit, workshops, webinars, training, and conferences are provided by the Canadian [Centre for Diversity and Inclusion \(CCDI\)](#) both in real-time and asynchronously. Researchers and students at Lakehead University can freely access these training materials and seminars by creating an account using their @lakeheadu.ca email address on the CCDI website. The [Knowledge Repository on the CCDI website](#) holds a variety of training documents, pre-recorded webinars, and conference presentations that are a great start for anyone looking to jumpstart their EDI training. This is also a great place for building upon your EDI knowledge and for filling in some gaps where your understanding is not as strong. The CCDI offers tips, advice, and best practices for all to implement within their teams in order to enhance EDI across the country.

Please note that EDI language is constantly evolving, and this toolkit is a working document.

Before You Write an EDI Research Plan

In order to begin constructing an EDI plan for your research, you must first consider your own position, privileges, experiences and identify factors that may be influencing your views. Recognizing your own position and preconceived associations or biases will help you identify areas where you can grow to be more inclusive. Tools such as the [Harvard Implicit Association Test](#), participating in [EDI training courses](#), and learning from others with different perspectives, will help you grow not only as a person but as a research leader. As a Principle Investigator (PI), your approach to EDI directly impacts how your research group and trainees will approach EDI in research. Bring awareness to the [policies and procedures](#) set out by Lakehead University within your research team and discuss the role EDI plays in research. You can also encourage your trainees to become [certified in inclusion](#) and embrace diversity locally by participating in cultural events both on and off campus. When everyone is treated with respect and our differences are embraced rather than dismissed, we can have more innovative and impactful research projects that will make the world a better place!

How to Discuss EDI in Research Plans

In order to effectively incorporate EDI into your research plan, you will need to have clear and precise objectives that address inequities within your specific research environment. Reviewing [Lakehead's EDI Action Plan](#) and [Strategic Research Plan](#) will help provide direction and institutional links for your own EDI research plan. When drafting your EDI objectives, it is important to utilize [SMART goals](#) (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Based) that are direct and actionable. In combination with connections to Lakehead's EDI Action Plan and Research Plan, your EDI plan will have direction and will illustrate a comprehensive approach to promoting equity-deserving groups within the research environment to reviewers of your funding application.

How & Where to Incorporate EDI into Grant Applications

- **Research Excellence:**
 - Discuss past contributions to training where you exemplified EDI best practices
 - Ex. reducing barriers, mitigating biases, etc.
 - Describe any past instances where you promoted EDI in the research enterprise
 - Discuss your commitment to EDI in the research space
 - Ex. Training programs, certifications, etc.
- **Research Plan:**
 - You can link this section to [Lakehead's Research Plan](#) and highlight the commitment the institution has to EDI within research
 - Conducting [Sex and Gender-Based Analysis+](#) (SGBA+) for your specific research question can showcase your consideration of multiple identity factors within your research approach
- **Team Recruitment & Composition:**
 - Clearly describe your recruitment practices that are equitable and accessible
 - Ex. Public posting, use of ungendered language, encouragement of EDGs to apply, etc.
 - Discuss your assessment process for interviews and hiring, ensuring that all processes are fair, especially for equity deserving groups
 - Ex. Use the same interview questions, create an unbiased matrix with criteria for assessing applicants based only on the skills required for the job, ensure your interview team has [unconscious bias training](#), etc.
 - Describe your commitment to promoting diversity in thought and perspectives within your team
- **Training of HQP (Training Philosophy and Training Plan):**
 - **Training Philosophy:**
 - Describe both the barriers/challenges to inclusion for those from EDGs within your field/specific area of research and how you are addressing them with your specific approach to training
 - Describe concrete practices you are employing within your group to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion are upheld
 - Describe your approach to mentorship by highlighting EDI best practices
 - **Training Plan:**
 - Comment on how you employ flexible working arrangements to accommodate diverse needs, acknowledge multi-faith holidays, facilitate open communication, and have equitable processes for distributing learning/dissemination opportunities
 - Discuss any accessibility needs that may need to be addressed in your research team for everyone to participate equitably
 - Link this section to professional development opportunities for both your trainees and yourself to [institutional EDI training opportunities](#), [unconscious bias training](#), etc. that you require to be part of your research group
- **Knowledge Dissemination:**
 - Discuss how you will reach diverse audiences with different modalities of your results
 - Describe how you will equitably distribute learning and dissemination opportunities

Recommended Steps for Crafting your EDI Research Plan

The following sections describe recommendations for implementing EDI in your research plans that are in line with the [Lakehead EDI Action Plan](#) and the [Tri-Agency EDI Policy](#) for researchers.

1. Identifying the Research Question and Research Participants

An EDI approach to research recognizes that a person's identity is composed of multiple factors that intersect and impact their lived experience in different ways. In order to identify if identity factors may be affected by your research plan, research question, or those who participate in your research, you can conduct an [SGBA+](#). This process can help all researchers mitigate any harmful or unintended consequences of their research and identify areas for improved equity.

The following are some questions to ask:

- What are your assumptions and biases about your research question and research participants, and how do your own identities, privileges, and positions of power inform those assumptions and biases?
- Have you assumed that the research participants are equally impacted by the issue you have identified to research?
- Have you considered how EDGs are differentially impacted by the issue you have identified to research? Or, have you gathered disaggregated data that demonstrates how the issue impacts the identities and lived experiences of EDGs?
- Is the issue you have identified to research reflecting a diversity of perspectives? Are you applying an intersectional approach to your research, such as an SGBA+?
- Have you consulted others with different perspectives in formulating your research question and plan?

The following are recommendations for some steps you can take:

- Identify why the research participants you have identified to work with are marginalized or vulnerable.
 - Ex. What is the historical context of the issue (and the research participants) you have identified to research? Is this an ongoing or emerging issue?
- Consider what environmental factors may be contributing to the issue you have identified to research, including the social and systemic factors.
- Take a “nothing about us without us” approach to working with groups of people who have been made vulnerable through experiences such as colonialism and racism or ableism.
 - Consider using a community-based approach where you involve a community organization as a partner or an advisory group made up of people with lived experiences from the outset of the research process (in developing the research question before you seek funding).
- Ensure that your knowledge translation/mobilization/transfer plan involves disseminating your research back to the people it impacts, using a method accessible to that population/those populations.

2. Recruiting a Diverse Research Team

When selecting co-applicants, collaborators, post-doctoral fellows, research associates, research assistants, and students to join your research team, meaningfully engage members of EDGs. Consider a range of disciplinary perspectives and/or areas of research expertise in the ongoing development and composition of your core team. Some grants, like the New Frontiers Research Fund, require interdisciplinary research teams to have diverse perspectives and expertise to tackle a research question. When looking to incorporate EDI principles in research team composition, it is essential that every stage of the selection process be fair and transparent. Assessing a candidate's output using traditional evaluation metrics (i.e. number of publications, years of experience, etc.) may disadvantage researchers from EDGs. That is, because of systemic barriers, the career paths of many researchers from EDGs may have limited their potential research outputs. Therefore, it is crucial that these systemic barriers are recognized when recruiting candidates for a research team. When hiring team members, use an open and transparent hiring process, which includes job postings written using inclusive, non-gendered language, and is posted in diverse venues for at least thirty days. Furthermore, equitable hiring practices should be implemented, using matrices that are pre-determined to evaluate all candidates fairly, and [unconscious bias](#) training for search committee members.

When discussing your team, **do not tokenize team members** (including yourself). Do not provide demographic information or information about the composition of your team in any way (ex. "The PI is a member of a visible minority group and our team is comprised of X women, X minority students and X students who require accommodations".)

The following are some questions to ask:

- Have you incorporated equitable hiring practices into the selection process for research team members?
- Have you used inclusive, non-gendered language in the posting?
- Have you posted the job in places where those from EDGs will find it?
 - Ex. [Recruit Disability](#), [Pride At Work Canada](#), or [Indigenous Professionals Association of Canada](#)
- Have you used a "person-task fit" approach, matching characteristics of individuals with characteristics of the research and/or translational task?
- Have you used tools such as [ResearchGate](#), [ORCID](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Request a Woman in STEMM](#) to find diverse team members with relevant expertise beyond your networks?
- In the research team selection process, have you considered how a candidate's career gaps will be assessed and not used against them in the hiring decision?
- In the research team selection process, have you considered how a candidate's alternative forms of research and alternative ways of knowing will be assessed, including community-based research and Indigenous research methodologies?

The following are recommendations for steps you can take (partially adapted from the [University of Guelph's Building Community: Introduction to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Booklet](#)):

- Consider implementing equitable hiring practices and reach out to the [Office of Human Rights and Equity](#) for guidance
- Consider requiring that all members of the research team responsible for hiring take [unconscious bias training](#) and [EDI training](#) offered by the Office of Research Services
- Consider familiarizing yourself with the [Canada Research Chair Program EDI Best Practices for Hiring, Recruitment, and Retention](#) and the [Policies and Procedures](#) of the [Office of Human Rights and Equity](#)
- Remember to avoid using stereotypic descriptors when describing candidates and be respectful of all backgrounds/perspectives

3. Training

Recruiting research team members from EDGs is not the only step to ensure that EDI principles are incorporated. It is essential that the working environment is safe and respectful and that all team members, both faculty and trainees, have access to professional development opportunities, such as networking, conferences, and publications. Trainees, such as graduate and undergraduate students and postdoctoral fellows, should have the opportunity to both participate and lead research projects in an inclusive and supportive environment. Trainees should also be provided with individualized training plans in addition to regular supportive supervision and meaningful mentorship.

The following are some questions to ask:

- Have you included training and professional development opportunities for junior research team members in your research proposal?
 - Ex. Have you allocated funds for junior research team members/HQP to attend conferences?
- Have you identified policies and practices to ensure that team members from EDGs are supported and integrated into the team?
- Have you, as the project leader, and the research team members, taken EDI training, such as anti-racism, [unconscious bias](#), etc.?
- Have you included professional development opportunities for your trainees outside of your direct supervision?
 - Ex. Attending on-campus workshops or doing online training such as the courses available through [LinkedIn Learning](#)?

The following are recommendations for steps you can take (partially adapted from the [University of Guelph's EDI Office of Research Services Resource](#)):

- Consider providing EDI training for project leaders and research team members, including training on anti-racism, [unconscious bias](#), etc.
 - The Canadian Council for Diversity and Inclusion offers a free EDI certification course for students called [See Different](#)
 - Has your research team enrolled in Lakehead's Inclusive Research Leadership Certificate Program?
- Consider developing mentorship opportunities for research team members, including funding for ongoing training and professional development opportunities, in the research proposal
- Ensure that your group meetings incorporate all diverse perspectives and that everyone embraces differences with respect and dignity
- Cultivate positive beliefs about diversity by discussing the benefits associated with diversity in research teams
- Develop a formal statement from your research group regarding your commitment to diversity that is posted and updated yearly
- Ensure all team members have equitable access to the equipment and resources they need to complete their projects
- Ask group members to share their traditions with the group and jointly hold celebrations
- Accommodate individuals who may need flexible working hours and, ensure access to resources, including group meetings and discussions, are accessible for everyone
- Consider describing any accessibility needs that may need to be addressed for your research group to be more inclusive and equitable
- Encourage trainees to get involved in on-campus events that will broaden their horizons with respect to different cultures and perspectives (including the [Indigenous Students Centre](#), [Multicultural Centre](#), [Gender Equity Centre](#), and [Pride Central](#))
- Provide financial support for trainees to attend conferences and for community members who participate in your research activities
- Create a mentorship program for new/international trainees. For further support for international students and staff, contact [Lakehead International](#)

Specific EDI Requirements to Note

The following section outlines specific requirements, in terms of EDI, to be mindful of when composing your applications. Some agencies require certifications, while others require concrete practices to be discussed within your application. Please read the specific requirements for the grant you are applying for and reach out to the EDI Research Facilitator at edi.research@lakeheadu.ca for additional information or assistance.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

CIHR assesses project grants based on concept (25%) and feasibility (75%). For the feasibility criterion (i.e. research design and analysis), CIHR applies an [SGBA+](#) analysis. CIHR expects all applicants to integrate sex and gender into their research design when appropriate, as described in the [Peer Review Manual](#) for the Project Grant. A helpful resource to better understand how to integrate sex and gender for CIHR application is the article: "[Impacts of integrating sex and gender in research](#)," which describes why EDI is important to consider in research design and analysis. This Agency has created its own sex and gender training modules for integrating sex and gender in research. The module that best fits your area of research must be completed prior to submitting the application, and proof of certification must be included in the application package. Moreover, CIHR also uses Self-identification Questionnaire as a tool to monitor equity performance. The questions provided in the questionnaire cover five prioritized dimensions by CIHR: gender, age, Indigenous identity, visible minority identity, and disability. Through the data collected, CIHR aims to ensure that its funding competitions are fair and provide equitable access to research funds.

For Project Grant Applications: The Nominated Principal Applicant must complete one of the [sex- and gender-based analysis training modules](#) available online through the CIHR Institute of Gender and Health and upload with the application the Certificate of Completion in the Attach Other Application Material task.

Natural Science and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)

NSERC expects applicants to consider EDI principles in their research proposals by asking them to explain their process of identifying, recruiting and selecting research team members.

As part of a Discovery Grant application, Principle Applicants are expected to include a [Highly Qualified Personnel \(HQP\) Training Plan](#), which consists of two parts: a training philosophy and a research training plan. For the training philosophy, applicants are asked to describe their approach to training and promoting the participation of HQP by adopting best practices for equitable hiring. For the research training plan, applicants are asked to describe their plan for training and professional development opportunities for HQPs throughout the research process. For both components, applicants are asked to identify the encountered barriers in the process of adopting EDI practices. NSERC also encourages applicants to adopt an [SGBA+](#) framework for their research when applicable.

Discussions on EDI in the research environment, including recruitment and retention of HQP and external collaborators, are required in several other NSERC grant applications as well.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

Depending on the specific application, SSHRC's requirements when it comes to EDI vary. In Partnership Grant applications specifically, this agency does expect EDI to be addressed in the research design and research project sections. SSHRC has a [Guide for Addressing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Partnership Grants](#) that should be followed when submitting proposals for this program. They indicate that EDI should be addressed with feasible and achievable actions that will be taken to promote EDI in the research space.

SSHRC's also has [Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research](#), which promotes and supports research by, and with Indigenous peoples. These guidelines place an emphasis on Indigenous knowledge and perspectives as well as an understanding of the unique nature of conducting research with Indigenous communities. An [SGBA+](#) framework is encouraged as a means to identify the intersectional impacts of the research and the research process on Indigenous and other marginalized communities.

New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF)

NFRF has adopted [EDI principles as a best practice](#). Applicants are required to address EDI within the application modules of several NFRF programs. Within the Exploration Program, EDI is assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, where applicants must receive a Pass in all [four evaluated criteria](#), including

1. **Analysis of Context**: the applicant must clearly demonstrate an understanding of EDI considerations/systemic barriers within the context of the research team and provide a clear explanation of the team's specific challenges/opportunities related to EDI.
2. **Concrete Practice**: the applicant must clearly identify a minimum of one concrete practice specific to the context of the research team, for each of the challenges listed in the above analysis.
3. **Implementation**: the applicant must provide a clear and realistic explanation of how the concrete practice(s) has been/will be implemented and should consider the challenges associated with their implementation.
4. **Impact**: the applicant must explain how the concrete practice(s) will impact EDI, and describe a suitable methodology for measuring success, including specific evaluation criteria.

EDI considerations within NFRF applications will also be assessed within the context of project feasibility criteria based on an [SGBA+](#) framework.

Helpful Resources

Tri-Agency & Government Guides Resources:

- [NSERC Guide for Applicants: Considering Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in applications](#)
- [NSERC Policy and Guidelines Contributions to Research and Training](#)
- [SSHRC Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research](#)
- [SSHRC Indigenous Research Statement of Principles](#)
- [SSHRC's Guidelines for Effective Research Training](#)
- [CIHR How to Integrate Sex and Gender into Research](#)
- [CIHR Impacts of Integrating Sex and Gender in Research](#)
- [New Frontiers Research Fund Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research](#)
- [Exploration Grant EDI Merit Indicators](#)
- [Canada Research Chair Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment, Hiring and Retention](#)
- [Dimensions Charter](#)
- [Tri-Agency DORA Declaration](#)
- [SSHRC Tools Indigenous Research and Research Training](#)
- [SSHRC Guide for Addressing EDI in Partnership Grants](#)

Online Training Links:

- [Tri-Agency Bias in Peer Review Module](#)
- [GBA+ Training Course](#)
- [CIHR Sex and Gender in Health Research Training Modules](#)
- [First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession Training Course \(Fee Associated\)](#)

Internal Resources:

- [Policies and Procedures of the Office of Human Rights and Equity at Lakehead University](#)
- [Lakehead University Indigenous Research Resources webpage](#)
- [Lakehead University Office of Research Services webpage](#)

Other Resources and Publications:

- [Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion Educational and Inclusion Guides](#)
- [Implicit Association Test from Harvard University](#)
- [Stanford University Gendered Innovation Project](#)
- [How to write SMART goals](#)
- [A guide for establishing SMART goals](#)
- [Using SMART goals in the scientific process](#)
- [National Research Council Enhancing the Effectiveness of Team Science](#)
- [Better science with sex and gender: SGBA+ in Health Research 2017 Report on Women in Science and Engineering in Canada](#)
- [CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#)

Contact Information for EDI Related Questions

Office of Human Rights and Equity

Email: humanrights@lakeheadu.ca

Phone: 807-343-8010 Ext. 7763

Office: Fifth Floor of the Chancellor Paterson Library, LI 5014

Office of Indigenous Initiatives

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Office of Research Services

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