



NDP Responds

Note: We have yet to release our full platform but here are the answers to date outlining our commitments.

Canadian Association for Neuroscience

1. Financial support from the Canadian government is essential to ensure Canadian researchers continue to innovate and make important independent discoveries. Over the last years, many research teams have seen their budgets cut because of increasing demand and therefore decreasing success rates in open funding programs. How would your government work to reverse this trend?

NDP Response: The Conservatives have waged an ideological war on science and evidence-based decision making and damaged Canada's reputation as a country of tolerance, enlightenment and critical thought. They have reduced funding for Canadian researchers by \$200 million dollars (2007-14), when measured in constant 2010 dollars. Canada has also fallen from 18th position to 25th out of 41 countries for the total business investments in research and development as a proportion of our GDP, according to the Science, Technology and Innovation Council's 2012 State of the Nation report. Academic researchers and university teachers, in the pure sciences and the social sciences and humanities alike, need a government that encourages their curiosity and passion rather than stamping it out. They need a government that never loses sight of the long-term investments needed to help them become the Nobel laureates of tomorrow.

An NDP government lead by Tom Mulcair will take practical steps to support our researchers, young and established. We will support researchers in post-secondary education institutions, including universities, colleges and polytechnics with a total investment of \$105 million in new funds over five years. We will make sure that government policy supports both our leading research institutions and values the role that smaller colleges and universities play in communities across Canada. We will maintain the Canada First Research Excellence Fund to help Canadian universities compete globally.

2. How do you see the role of government in research? Should government agencies take an active role in identifying and targeting specific research priorities or should they benefit from the wealth of knowledge and information within our scientific communities by emphasizing the value of peer-review in determining the most exciting and important scientific research questions?

NDP Response: Canadians count on their government to make smart policy decisions to protect the health and safety of Canadians and their environment, and to help build an innovative, 21st century, knowledge economy. To do this, government and parliamentarians need the right tools and evidence to make the most informed policy decisions in the public interest.

An NDP government will work to enhance the role of science in decision-making. We will create a Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister headed by a Chief Science Advisor to ensure that our government always has access to the best possible scientific advice from experts in all fields. In keeping with the recommendations of the Royal Society, we will work with the Society and other stakeholders to develop the terms and mandate of this council. We will work to re-establish scientific capacity in government departments.

An NDP government will restore the voice of science in government. We will establish the Office of the Parliamentary Science Officer as per Bill C-558 to ensure that parliamentarians have the best possible access to science-based analysis. We will put an end to the Conservatives' policy of muzzling scientists and ensure that Canada's leading experts are freely available to speak to the media and to publish their findings. We will implement the NDP's comprehensive plan to promote scientific integrity, as laid out in M-453.

An NDP government will facilitate research. We will make government data open and available by default, in a useable format to assist researchers and businesses across Canada. We will immediately move to restore the mandatory long-form census and provide the necessary funding to ensure it can be included in the 2016 census.

3. Many recent government policies favour research with immediate applied value and potential industrial partnership. However, most great discoveries in science come from basic, curiosity-driven research, and supporting basic research is therefore an investment in the future. Canadian scientists are worried the balance is currently shifted too strongly towards applied research, at the detriment of basic research. How would your government work to balance the need for both applied and curiosity-driven basic research?

NDP Response: An NDP government will ensure a balanced approach to science and technology policy and will undertake a transparent and inclusive review of Canada's science and technology strategy to ensure that all voices are heard. We will respect the status of granting councils as arm's length government agencies and will restore their independence to allow the best research to be funded through the open competition process.