



Canadian Research
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CRKN – Scholars Portal Journals Committee (SPJC) Terms of Reference

Approved: CRKN Board of Directors, June 25, 2025

Purpose:

Reporting to the CRKN Board of Directors, the CRKN Scholars Portal Journals Committee (SPJC) will assist the Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities by guiding and overseeing the operations of, and making recommendations regarding the overall direction of, the Scholars Portal Journals (SPJ) Trusted Digital Repository (TDR) service for scholarly resources licensed by CRKN members, governed by CRKN and its members and operated by the service provider, University of Toronto Libraries.

Scholars Portal Journals is a bilingual, scalable, and secure Canadian access point that provides preservation services and post-termination access in partnership with academic libraries to enhance discovery, access, preservation, and use of research content licensed by CRKN, and to establish a reliable platform and provider for exercising perpetual access rights in the event of cancellations, journal transfers and cessations, or other “trigger events” within the scope of content license agreements.

The SPJC is established by the Board of Directors as a Standing Committee of the Board, pursuant to section 6.9 of the Corporation’s By-Laws.

Responsibilities:

The Committee provides oversight of the continued successful functioning of Scholars Portal Journals. It sets strategic priorities and actions, advises CRKN and University of Toronto Libraries on new initiatives and developments, and makes decisions on operations of SPJ as needed. Responsibilities include:

- Strategic direction-setting on overall evolution of Scholars Portal Journals TDR
- Provide strategic oversight of technical operations; e.g. new platform features, redevelopment of interface
- Conducting a review of Scholars Portal Journals name and branding to ensure alignment with an expanded presence across Canadian universities; collaborating with CRKN’s engagement team to consult with members on SP branding
- Collection development; inclusion/exclusion of content, expansion to non-CRKN licensed resources and other file types
- Fill an advisory role with respect to decisions around potential partnerships, collaborations, and emerging uses of the SPJ TDR and its hosted content
- Budget oversight and development; budget principles revisited annually
- Policy approval
- Management of the TDR audit or re-certification process
- Approval of work plan/priorities
- Advocacy and promotion
- Provide updates on progress to CRKN Members
- Seeking and respond to Member feedback
- As requested by the Content Strategy Committee, provide input to negotiations with publishers
- Regular review and revision of terms of current MOU/agreements with the Service Provider

Membership:

- One (1) representative from a CRKN member library from each of the following four regions:
 - Western Canada
 - Ontario
 - Québec
 - Atlantic Canada
- One (1) representative from the Content Strategy Committee to align with negotiations with vendors and publishers
- One (1) optional representative from the Preservation and Access Committee to align preservation and TDR practices

Preference/priority will be given to representatives who collectively possess experience in the following areas:

- Accessibility
- Digital preservation standards and practices
- E-Resource licensing and negotiations
- Finance and budgeting
- Scholarly communications, copyright, and open access
- Text and data mining

Ex Officio Members

- Director, Scholars Portal, University of Toronto
- Director, Content Program, CRKN
- One staff representative from each of the regional consortia with licensing and negotiation expertise

Ex Officio members are encouraged but not required to attend all meetings and do not factor into quorum count.

Staff from other teams may be invited to attend meetings as required.

Appointment and Nominations Process:

CRKN's Executive Committee will issue an open call for nominations to CRKN members to fill voting member positions. Nominations shall be accompanied by a statement of support by each nominee's direct supervisor to ensure adequate workload capacity for the candidate.

Nominations shall be reviewed and approved by the CRKN Executive Committee.

Voting members of the committee will serve a three-year term that is once renewable at the discretion of the Executive Committee for a maximum of six years.

Ex officio members will be appointed by and serve on behalf of their respective organizations.

Chair

The voting members of the Committee will select a Chair from among the members representing the four regions to serve a three-year term as Chair of the Committee, once renewable for a maximum of six years.

Financial and Administrative Policies:

- Service on the Committee is non-remunerative
- Travel and meeting expenses for committee members are reimbursed according to the policies of CRKN, including the Travel Expense Policy
- Members of the Committee will comply with Board-approved governance and organizational policies, including code of conduct and conflict of interest policies

Committee Procedures:

The Committee will meet virtually three to five (3-5) times throughout the year, with additional meetings as agreed to by the voting members.

The Committee may form and convene additional sub-groups to perform specific tasks as needed.

Communications:

The Committee will regularly report on progress to the CRKN Board of Directors. Working with CRKN's Strategy and Engagement team, the committee will establish a plan to communicate with members.

Annual Budget and Member Fees:

Once a year, prior to the end of the fiscal year (defined as May 1 to April 30), the Service Provider shall prepare a CRKN-SPJ budget with a view to covering all expected operating costs. The Committee will meet to review, amend as necessary, and recommend to the Finance and Audit Committee the budget for CRKN-SPJ platform for the following fiscal year. A schedule of member fees will also be approved as part of the budget process. Subsequently, the Committee will present the budget and annual fees to the CRKN Finance and Audit Committee for review prior to submitting to the CRKN Board of Directors for final approval.

Notice of Meetings:

Meetings may be held at any time provided written notice has been given to each committee member at least seven days, exclusive of the day on which notice is given, before the meeting is to take place. Notice of meetings may be waived by unanimous written consent of committee members. A schedule of meetings for the coming year will be established before the end of each calendar year.

Quorum:

A majority of the voting members must be present at any meeting to establish a quorum. Any meeting that includes a vote on the annual budget must have full representation from all voting members.

Minutes:

Minutes shall be taken at each Committee meeting and will be made available for review and approval at the next scheduled meeting.

Voting:

Votes will be restricted to voting representatives only.