The Black Scholarship Institute
Re-Claim. Re-Awaken. Re-Imagine.

Membership Drive FAQ

Theme 1: Purpose, Mandate, and What Distinguishes the BSI

1) What is the Black Scholarship Institute (BSI)?
The BSI is a pan-university home for Black scholarship, community-engaged research, and intergenerational leadership at Toronto Metropolitan University. Grounded in collective care and shared responsibility, the BSI advances Black intellectual traditions and supports Black flourishing across the institution and beyond.

2) When was the BSI institutionalized?
The BSI is now officially institutionalized as of October 2025.

3) Why was the BSI established?
The BSI was established in response to TMU's Anti-Black Racism (ABR) Climate Review and the call to strengthen the conditions for Black scholarly life through durable infrastructure, accountability, and support.

4) How is the BSI connected to PICCABR?
The BSI advances TMU's commitments under PICCABR by providing coordinated, university-wide pathways for Black scholarship, leadership, mentorship, and community connection—supporting sustained action beyond one-time initiatives.

5) What distinguishes the BSI from other units or initiatives?
The BSI is distinct because it is:

- Pan-university and lifecycle-based: serving Black graduate and post-graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty, staff-scholars, and community partners across disciplines and career stages.
- Rooted in Black intellectual traditions: centring Black ways of knowing, community accountability, and intergenerational knowledge transfer.
- Infrastructure-building (not episodic): creating lasting systems—mentorship pathways, scholarly communities, and the Black Scholars Digital Guide and Repository—rather than one-off programming.
- Relational by design: grounded in Ubuntu, collective care, and shared stewardship, strengthening connection between community and academy.
- Accountability-oriented: translating insights into action and reporting outcomes where appropriate.

Theme 2: Membership Pathways and Participation

6) Who can apply for membership?
We welcome applications from Black scholars and our allies across TMU and our community networks.

7) What are the membership categories?
There are two categories: Core Membership and Affiliate Membership.

8) Who is eligible for Core Membership?
Core Membership is for Black scholars, including CUPE lecturers with academic aspirations, librarians, staff, graduate and post-graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and community partners.

9) What is the Core Member commitment?
Core Members commit to stewarding at least one BSI initiative each year, such as governance, mentorship, programming, or SRC collaborations.

10) What are the benefits of core membership?
Membership strengthens connection and collaboration across Black scholarship and practice at TMU, including opportunities to:

- shape BSI programs, research priorities, and mentorship pathways;
- participate in writing circles, leadership initiatives, and community-engaged projects;
- support intergenerational mentorship of Black graduate students and postdoctoral fellows; deepen cross-disciplinary relationships and visibility.

11) Who is eligible for Affiliate Membership?
Affiliate Membership is for Black and allied colleagues whose work intersects with Black communities, racial justice, equity, or decolonization, and who wish to remain connected to BSI initiatives and opportunities.

12) What can Affiliate Members expect?
Affiliate Members can participate in selected BSI initiatives, events, and community-engaged projects as capacity allows, and contribute to scholarly community-building through partnership and practice.

Theme 3: Member Supports

13) Does the BSI provide letters of endorsement?
Yes—where appropriate, and when aligned with the BSI mandate, the BSI may provide letters of endorsement for nominations, awards, funding applications, and other relevant opportunities.

14) What are the stipulations for letters of endorsement?
To ensure fairness and sustainability, endorsement requests follow these stipulations:

- ***Alignment:*** The request must align with the BSI's mission/mandate and advance Black flourishing.
- ***Standing***: The requester must be a Core or Affiliate Member in good standing (or have a submitted/confirmed application, where relevant).
- ***Lead time***: Requests must be submitted at least [10–15] business days before the deadline (and [3–4 weeks] for major awards/grants, where possible).
- ***Complete package***: Provide the opportunity description, deadline, a current CV, and a brief statement of alignment/impact; a draft letter is encouraged where applicable.
- ***Capacity***: Letters are subject to BSI capacity and may be prioritized where institutional relevance, partnership, or stewardship is strongest.
- ***No guarantee***: Submission does not guarantee approval; the BSI retains discretion.

15) How do I request a letter of endorsement?
Submit your request to *sarah.bukhari@torontomu.ca* with the complete package above and within the stated timelines.

Theme 4: How to Apply, What Happens Next, and Use of Information

16) What is the purpose of the membership mapping?
The BSI is mapping the breadth of Black scholarship and expertise across TMU and in community to strengthen collaboration, mentorship, visibility, and access to opportunities.

17) What will the mapping produce?
This mapping will inform the creation of a BSI digital repository and a **Black Scholars Digital Guide**—an accessible directory and knowledge repository that strengthens visibility, connection, and discovery.

18) How do I apply for BSI membership?
Please reach out to gracecamille1.munroe@torontomu.ca for more details. faculty/unit, contact information).

19) What is the application deadline?
On-going

20) How long does the application take?
Approximately 10 minutes.

21) Are alternative formats available?
Yes. Alternative formats or email submissions are available upon request to support accessibility and inclusion. Contact: ***gracecamille1.munroe@torontomu.ca***

22) What happens after I apply?
Applications are reviewed by the BSI Director; after which you will receive confirmation

of your membership status within 14 days of submission. New members will be invited to a BSI Members Gathering and added to BSI communications.

23) Will my information be kept confidential?
Yes. Application information will be treated as confidential, accessed only by the BSI team for membership administration and planning, and shared publicly only in aggregate where appropriate.

24) How will my application information be used?
Information will be used for membership administration, planning, and to connect members with relevant opportunities and collaborations. Where applicable, members may be invited to opt in to inclusion in the Black Scholars Digital Guide and BSI digital repository.

25) Who can I contact with questions?
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