In 1985, the Office of the Secretary of State created a Joint Chair in Women’s Studies to be held by the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. The five regional chairs of women's studies in Canada are in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Quebec and Halifax.

Working in both French and English, the incumbent of the Joint Chair in Women’s Studies at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University, teaches, engages in research and participates in appropriate committees and events on both campuses. She acts as a resource person on women’s issues and feminist research at both universities. She also establishes and maintains contact with local, regional, national and international feminist educational and community-based organizations.

The following women have been the incumbents of the Joint Chair in Women’s Studies since its establishment:

1985-1990  The Honourable Monique Bégin
1991-1996  Greta Hofmann Nemiroff
1997      Dr. Pnina G. Abir-Am
1998      Dr. Wendy Robbins
1999-2000  Dr. Ann Porter
2002-2006  Dr. Eva Rathgeber
2007      Dr. Rajkumari Shanker
2009-2010  Dr. Agnes Whitfield
2010-2011  Dr. Pamela J. Walker
2011-2012  Dr. Lori A. Burns
2012-2014  Dr. Pamela J. Walker
2014-2016  Dr. Sylvie Frigon
2016-2019  Dr. Ummni Khan
2019-      Dr. Nadia Abu-Zahra