

ELDERS AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS:

UOTTAWA GUIDE TO INDIGENOUS PROTOCOLS



uOttawa

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UOTTAWA INDIGENOUS AFFIRMATION

The University of Ottawa acknowledges and honours that its campus sits on the traditional unceded territory of the Omamiwini Anishnàbeg (Algonquin) and recognizes the Indigenous people and culture through the official uOttawa Indigenous Affirmation:

Omamiwini Anishnàbemowin (Algonquin)

*Ni manàdjiyànànig Màmìwinini Anishnàbeg, ogog kà nàgadawàbandadjig iyo aki eko weshkad.
Ako nongom ega wikàd kì mìgiwewàdj.*

*Ni manàdjiyànànig kakina Anishnàbeg ondaje kaye ogog kakina eniyagizidjig enigokamigàg Kanadàng
eji ondàpinangig endàwàdjìn Odàwàng.*

Ninisidawinawànànig kenawendamòdjig kije kikenindamàwin; weshkinìgidjig kaye kejeyàdizidjig.

Nigijeweninmànànig ogog kà nìgànì sòngideyedjig; weshkad, nongom; kaye àyànikàdj.

English

We pay respect to the Algonquin people, who are the traditional guardians of this land. We acknowledge their longstanding relationship with this territory, which remains unceded.

We pay respect to all Indigenous people in this region, from all nations across Canada, who call Ottawa home.

We acknowledge the traditional knowledge keepers, both young and old.

And we honour their courageous leaders, past, present, and future.

INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND INTENTIONS

The University of Ottawa is committed to working in partnership with Indigenous people to seek reconciliation through respect of Indigenous traditions, worldview and culture. The University is keenly aware of the importance of Indigenous traditional knowledge keepers on campus for students and staff. Elders are the most commonly discussed group of Indigenous traditional knowledge keepers, but there are many different types of traditional knowledge keepers throughout the various First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities across Canada.

This guide is meant to assist in understanding some of the types of Indigenous traditional knowledge keepers, as well as the protocols for engaging and working with them. We acknowledge the importance of Indigenous traditions and encourage members of the University community to use the terminology preferred by the individual, or, when unsure of someone's title, to use the term "knowledge keeper."

Some English terms, such as "traditional knowledge keeper" or "elder," are not traditional words, and are disputed by some communities. We use them be as inclusive as possible, while acknowledging that they may not be the best terms for everyone.

In this guide, you will learn some commonly-used expressions within the communities and nations with the largest populations in the Ottawa region, as well as the protocols for contacting, meeting and engaging with traditional Indigenous knowledge keepers, and you will discover some Indigenous words as a guide for using Indigenous languages within the context of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures.

The word "Indigenous" is used to refer to all First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities as a group. When referencing individual nations within those groups, such as the Omamiwinini Anishnàbeg Algonquin nation (upon whose territory the uOttawa campus sits), the specific term for the nation will be used and language related to the said community will also be included.

This handbook attempts to be as inclusive as possible. It was developed under the guidance of a variety of Indigenous knowledge keepers from each of the communities referenced in it.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS

Categories of traditional Indigenous knowledge keepers



Claudette Commanda, Special Advisor to the Dean on Reconciliation
Photo credit: Sara Cornthwaite (Indspire)

There are many types of traditional Indigenous knowledge keepers, ranging from first language speakers to elders. Elders have become the most recognized type of knowledge keeper, and there are specific protocols surrounding an individual being gifted with that title. Not all older Indigenous people are elders, although they may be well-respected and knowledgeable people.

The term “elder” refers to a very specific title and role that carries a great deal of honour and responsibility. Be mindful as to how an individual would like to be referred to, instead of presuming that they are an elder.

Elders are people who have chosen to walk in the path of spirituality; they may carry sacred objects, smudge or work with medicines. According to an elder from the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, these items are not to be handled under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Treat all traditional knowledge keepers with great respect, as they carry knowledge that has been passed down for innumerable generations and walk in good way.

This compendium delves into some common types of traditional knowledge keepers, but we will begin with elders, as uOttawa has some elders-in-residence on campus.

Elders

Elders are individuals who are deeply respected individuals within their communities. They are the keepers of traditional teachings, cultural knowledge, spiritual connection and honoured wisdom. They possess the qualities of respect, gratitude, humility, honesty, wisdom, love, kindness and patience.

People are only considered elders if their community has publicly acknowledged them as such. There are no self-appointed elders, nor can elders be appointed by non-Indigenous communities. Elders are generally quite modest, and eschew titles of high status, preferring to live in the path of spiritual and cultural balance. The term “elder” is an English word that does not directly translate to the Indigenous words for these positions of respect within communities. Elders are not always elderly people, but instead, can be of many ages, as it is the community that appoints them as guides for their people.

When working for a school, elders tend to offer more specific support, such as guidance sessions with students and staff. First Nations and Métis may perform smudging ceremonies, whereas Inuit elders may light a *qulliq* (a traditional Inuit lamp made from soapstone and seal oil), offer prayers, and facilitate sharing circles, drumming and singing, along with other activities that will be discussed in the chapter on traditional Indigenous knowledge sharing.

Do not ask traditional knowledge keepers to attend an event to just do a prayer or opening and then leave. Elders and traditional knowledge keepers should be invited to attend events in their entirety and are given priority for asking questions, or offering comments and feedback. This is how we learn from them and ensure that we are walking a good path.

Every Indigenous community cares for its elders. It is a tradition for community members to share their food, provide warm clothing, build and maintain homes for their elders, and keep company with them in exchange for their guidance and kindness. Elders have always been treated as beloved grandmothers and grandfathers to all community members and across nations.

When the University invites an elder to be present on campus, offering an honorarium is appropriate compensation for their time. Money has become another way of supporting elders in exchange for their willingness to share their teachings, but it does not replace the need to show gratitude through offering gifts such as tobacco ties or small tokens of appreciation to these honoured guests at the University. Elders are not employees of the institution in the same way that faculty and staff are. Although they are paid for their time, they are also gifting us with their wisdom and teachings, and for that, we show gratitude.

Tobacco as an offering

In many First Nations and Métis communities, traditional tobacco is offered when requesting the advice or guidance of an elder. Tobacco is known as *nasemà* in *Omamiwini Anishnàbemowin* (the Algonquin language), and is the first of the four sacred medicines. It sits in the East position on the Medicine Wheel and represents *Wàbanong*, which means the direction of the dawn. The East is always the beginning and symbolizes the first stages of life in infancy, as well as beginnings and springtime. It is important to know that in many Indigenous cultures, individuals should not handle medicines if they have had any drugs or alcohol. Therefore, it is best not to hold tobacco, or any sacred items, if you have recently consumed alcohol or drugs.

Tobacco is generally offered in its traditional form, not smoking tobacco, but if you are unable to locate the traditional braids, smoking tobacco will suffice. For traditional tobacco, as well as all medicines and gifts, we recommend the store Beaded Dreams, located at 426 Bank Street in Ottawa (613-235-8378 or info@beadeddreams.com).

Tobacco is offered in a tobacco tie. A small pinch of tobacco is placed in a small square of cloth. The corners are then pinched to form a pouch, and then tied with a ribbon or yarn. Think positive and grateful thoughts while making the tie and your good intentions will be transferred to the gift.

How to present tobacco

Approach an elder well in advance of the event you wish them to attend. You can email or call the elder to ask to meet with them, and then, when you meet in person, request their presence at your event. Bring a tobacco tie for your first meeting with all First Nations and Métis elders. Inuit elders do not expect tobacco, but you may offer them a small gift in lieu of a tie. For First Nations and Métis elders, place the tobacco tie on a table or indicate that you are presenting it to them while you make your request. If they accept your request, they will pick it up or take the tobacco of their own accord. This is a traditional way of honouring your request and indicating that they will accept your invitation.

You should then provide the elder with all the necessary details, accompanied by a written account of your request with all of the relevant information. You should also ask the elder if there is anything they require, such as parking or taxi assistance. For more information, see the section on elder protocols.

How to make a tobacco tie

Required elements:

- A small piece of cloth, measuring approximately 10 cm x 10 cm
- A small pinch of tobacco
- A piece of ribbon, string or yarn, or a strip of fabric
- Good and positive thoughts

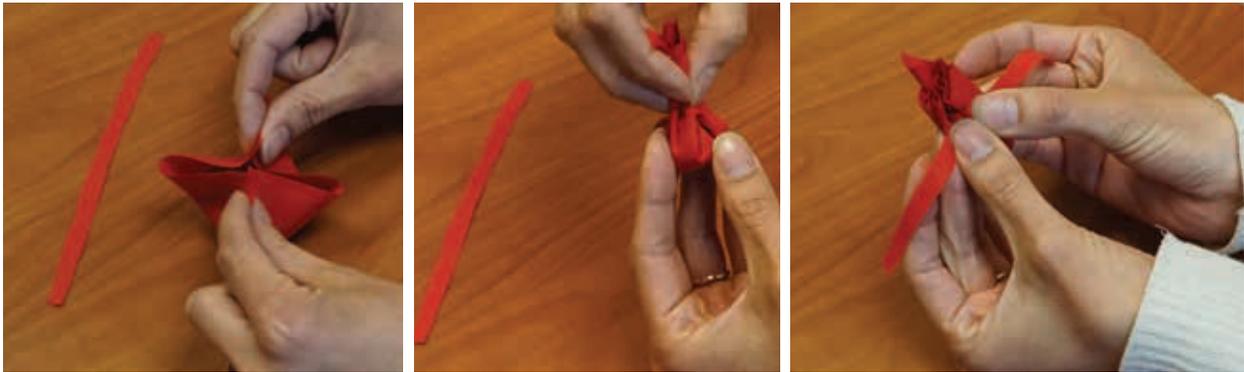
For photographic instructions, see the images below, or contact the [Mashkawaziwogamig Indigenous Resource Centre](#) for more information.

Step 1



- A. Lay your cloth flat.
- B. Place a small pinch of tobacco in the centre of the cloth.

Step 2



Left: Pinch the four corners of the cloth together in a bundle.

Middle: Lower your fingers to ensure that there are no gaps on the sides where tobacco could fall out.

Right: Take the piece of string and lay the pinched bundle on top.

Step 3



Fasten the tie and ensure the tobacco is secure.

Honoraria for traditional knowledge keepers

Rates

The Office of Indigenous Affairs does not set a pre-determined rate on the behalf of traditional knowledge keepers, as it is not our place to determine the monetary value of their time and teachings. Ask the traditional knowledge keeper you are inviting for their standard rate, but expect to pay no less than \$100/hour with a base fee of \$100, regardless of the duration of the event. Do not contact a traditional knowledge keeper and assume that they will volunteer their time. If they are required to travel to attend, their transportation and parking costs should be reimbursed. Upon arrival, they should be offered tea or coffee, and if they are present for more than three hours, a meal should be provided.

If your department or service requires forms to be filled out to facilitate compensation for the traditional knowledge keeper, see your finance officer for assistance. Your faculty's or office's financial service officers will be able to help you understand the payment process.

Advise the traditional knowledge keeper that it may be necessary to fill out some paperwork, and assist them in doing so. Most traditional knowledge keepers will be unfamiliar with the University's financial processes. It can be helpful to create an invoice for them and to walk them through the [Casual or Multiple Pay Employee form](#).

If you require a translator, contact the [Mashkawaziwogamig Indigenous Resource Centre](#) for assistance.

Step One:

Contact the financial administrator for your faculty or service.

Step Two:

Request an invoice from the traditional knowledge keeper for the agreed-upon fee. If you have any questions or require assistance, contact the [Mashkawaziwogamig Indigenous Resource Centre](#).

Step Three:

Help the elder or traditional knowledge keeper fill out the Casual or Multiple Pay Employee form.

Step Four:

Submit the invoice and accompanying form to the financial officer in your faculty or service.

General traditional knowledge keeper protocol

Ensure that you provide the traditional knowledge keeper with paid parking close to your event. Have someone escort them from the parking lot and/or meet them when they arrive via taxi or other means, and walk with them to the event location. If they have to come from out of town, we also pay for their travel and send someone to pick them up or meet them at their arrival location.

It is important to follow up with the elder in the week preceding the event as a reminder. Most traditional knowledge keepers are in very high demand and one must be mindful of this.

It is entirely possible that the traditional knowledge keeper may have to cancel due to unexpected community needs, health or a variety of other issues. This is why it is very important to follow up. In the event of a cancellation, be respectful and empathize with their needs.

Often, traditional knowledge keepers will be accompanied by someone. This should not preclude a uOttawa staff person meeting them on their arrival on campus. The companion may not be familiar with the campus.

Note

Do not presume that you can photograph or record the traditional knowledge keeper. Traditionally, ceremonies such as smudging are not photographed. Ask for permission to shoot photographs or video in advance. It is also not appropriate to touch any of the traditional knowledge keeper's sacred items. Ask before picking up or touching anything that the traditional knowledge keeper may have brought with them.

If you ever require clarification, it is always appropriate and welcome to ask the traditional knowledge keeper questions.



TITLES AND PROTOCOLS FOR ELDERS OF VARIOUS NATIONS IN THE OTTAWA AREA

There are Indigenous words used for traditional knowledge keepers that have special meaning in each culture. You may hear these words used, want to have a better understanding of them and learn how to pronounce them. This section is meant to help the uOttawa community have a deeper understanding of some Indigenous cultures and does not include every community. It is best to ask the knowledge keeper what term they prefer to use.

This list contains protocols and suggested traditional gifts for elders. Keep in mind that each elder or traditional knowledge keeper is an individual with unique life experiences. The most important thing you can do is to spend time visiting with and listening to the elder before you ask to learn their preferences and their teachings, as well as find out what you can do to make them feel supported and comfortable.

There are numerous Indigenous nations and cultures across Canada. For the sake of brevity, we have selected a few nations typically found in the National Capital Region: the Omamìwìnini Anishnaabeg (Algonquin), Anishnaabeg, Northern Cree, Haudenosaunee (Mohawk), Métis and Inuit.

If you have questions about protocols for nations not found in this list, contact the [Mashkawazìwogamìg Indigenous Resource Centre](#).

Omamìwìnini Anishinàbeg (Algonquin)



Kitizi = an elder; a person of knowledge who would be referred to as a sage

Kitizi(g) = elder(s)

Kejeyadizidjig = elders

Kije inini = elder head man (term of respect)

Kije inini(wag) = elder head men

Kije kwe = elder honoured women; clan mother (term of respect)

Kijekwe(g) = elder honoured women; clan mothers

Ikiwenzi = old man

Ikiwenzi(g) = old men

Mindimònye = old women

Mindimònye(g) = old women

Kichàyà = old person

Kichàyà(g) = old people

Kiie Kwe (female-identified elder)

Gifts for individual service:

- Tobacco (presented at the time of the request and when they arrive for the event)
- Moccasins, blankets, scarves
- Traditional beaded jewellery
- Sage or sweet grass

Kiie inini (male-identified elder)

Gifts for individual service:

- Tobacco (presented at the time of the request and when they arrive for the event)
- Moccasins
- Sage or sweet grass
- Tea or wild rice

Anishnaabeg: Ojibwe/Chippewa, Potawatomi and Odawa

In *Anishnaabemowin* [*ah-nish-nah-bem-win*] (the Ojibwe language), elders are commonly known as *Getsid*, or collectively, *Getsijig*.

The definition of *Getsid* is “older person,” whereas *Getsijig* refers to “older people.” Other terms include *Mndimooyenh* for a female elder and *Kiwenzii* for a male elder.

Mndimooyenh is a reverential term for an older woman.

Kiwenzii is a reverential term for an older man.

Mndimooyenyag and *Kiwenziyag* are the terms for more than one elder.

They may also be referred to as *Kizhi Kwe* or *Kizhi Nini*, for a woman or man, respectively.

Kizhi Kwe means a kind woman, and *Kizhi Nini* means a kind man. In groups of two or more, they are *Kizhikwewag* and *Kizhininwag*.

Transliterated pronunciation:

Getsig = [Geht-sid]

Getsijig = [Geht-seh-jig]

Mndimooyenh = [Min-deh-moh-yeh]

Mndimooyenyag = [Min-deh-moh-yen-yug]

Kiwenzii = [Keh-when-zee]

Kiwenziyag = [Keh-when-zee-yug]

KizhiKwe = [Keh-zheh-kway]

KizhiNini = [Keh-zheh-neh-neh]

KizhiKwewag = Keh-zheh-kway-wug

KizhiNinwag = Keh-zheh-nin-wug]

Haudenosaunee (Mohawk)

lakhisótha = our grandparents

Akhsótha = my grandmother

Rakhsótha = my grandfather

lakón:kwe = woman

Rón:kwe = man

Ákhsóht = (term used to address grandmother)

Rákhsóht = (term used to address grandfather)

Tóta = term used to address grandmother and/or grandfather

Ísta = term used to address mother and/or aunt

Rákeni = term used to address your father

lakoiane = clan mother

Hoyaneh = chief

Kaié:ri niioríwake lakoterihonton = female faith keeper

Kaié:ri niioríwake Roterihonton = male faith keeper

The Haudenosaunee don't have elders in the same way as the Anishinàbeg or Métis. However, Haudenosaunee do have traditional healers and elders who cure the sick and help maintain overall health and wellness in the community. They accept tobacco when requested to provide services or attend an event. The Haudenosaunee have spells, dances, ceremonies, sacred instruments and secret societies. In the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, there is the Grand Council, the world's oldest representative democracy. There are 50 chiefs, representing the clans from all of the nations. The Grand Council works to ensure the peace and well-being of all people.

The role of chief within the Confederacy is to be accountable to his nation. Chiefs are men and leaders of their clans in the Grand Council. They are called *Hoyaneh* (caretakers of the peace) and are selected by the clan mother, *lakoiane*. Clan mother is a hereditary title. The Haudenosaunee are a matrilineal society, in which traditional roles are inherited by women only. Within the five nations, there are nine Mohawk clan mothers, nine Oneida, thirteen Onondaga, ten Cayuga, and eight Seneca, for a total of 49 clan mothers. Clan mothers are responsible for overseeing the chief's actions, to ensure they are aligned with the Great Law. Clan mothers have their own wampum of two strings, one white and one purple, representing their title within the Confederacy. This wampum is passed on from the clan mother to the next hereditary clan mother upon the former's death.

The clan mothers' responsibilities also include removing chiefs who are not living in accordance with the Great Law, replacing the chief, maintaining knowledge of the Great Law, maintaining and sharing knowledge of the political structure, and living as honest and kind role models to their clan. They also name children in their clan from the list of clan names, and approve or disapprove of marriages according to clan lineage.

Under each clan mother are two faith keepers, one female relative and one male relative. The female's title is *Kaié:ri niioríwake lakoterihonton* and the male's is *Kaié:ri niioríwake Roterihonton*. Their responsibilities are to encourage ceremonial lifestyles and maintain Haudenosaunee culture. Faith keepers also perform spiritual advising within their clan.

Faith keepers and clan mothers must speak their ancestral language and maintain a traditional way of life. They are also very knowledgeable about the history of their people and are responsible for teaching it to the youth, along with being in charge of the Four Sacred Rituals of offering gratitude to the Creator.

Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit*

Please note that the word Inuit is a plural term — one individual is an Inuk. In Inuit culture, elders are respected for their traditional knowledge and are treated with respect. Inuit elders do not expect tobacco. In lieu of tobacco, you could provide a small gift while making your request. It is always best to approach an elder in person and respectfully make your request while presenting your gift.

Inuit elders generally open events and meetings by lighting the qulliq. Inuit consider all Inuit from Canada, the U.S., Russia and Greenland to be the same people, and all speak variations of the same language, with dialect differences. In Canada, Inuit refer to their homelands as *Inuit Nunangat*, which is comprised of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (NWT), Nunavut, Nunavik (Quebec) and Nunatsiavut (Newfoundland).

When an Inuk elder arrives, they shake hands with the people they are meeting. It is traditional to offer them tea or coffee or something to eat. Hospitality is integral to Inuit culture and Inuit are always careful to ensure that people feel welcome and included.

***Inuktitut* words for elders**

Ittuq = old man; grandfather
[*heet-turk*]

Ningiuq = old woman; grandmother
[*ning-ee-urk*]

Gifts for female-identifying Inuit elders:

- Furs such as sealskin, wolf, arctic hare, beaver, arctic fox
- Foods such as whale blubber, seal meat, caribou, Labrador tea
- Inuit jewellery such as earrings or beaded items
- Inuit handicrafts such as moccasins
- *Ulu* (woman's knife)

Gifts for male-identifying Inuit elders:

- Knives
- Carving tools
- Furs such as sealskin, wolf, arctic hare, beaver, arctic fox
- Foods such as whale blubber, seal meat, caribou, Labrador tea

Métis

Michif is one of the traditional languages of the Métis in the historic cultural territory or homeland between Lake of the Woods and the Rocky Mountains. It is a language derived from French and Cree. However, many Métis also speak other Indigenous languages such as Cree, Saulteaux or Dene as their first language. Given the fact that, Métis' grandmothers were often First Nations women, many Métis traditions are similar to their First Nations relatives, including the tobacco offerings and other ceremonial protocols.

Michif language

Elder = *li pleu vyeu*

Knowledge = *kishkaytomawin* ("knowing particular knowledge"; the teachings)

Traditional = *kaayaash ka kii tootamihk* ("they did that long ago")

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS



Traditional knowledge keepers are individuals who carry out teachings but do not refer to themselves as elders. They may be spiritual helpers or work to carry on the traditions of their communities. Knowledge keepers tend to offer teachings and similar services as elders, but they do not carry the title of elder. This may be a personal choice or because they have not been gifted the title by their communities.

Traditional knowledge keepers should be treated with the same respect shown to elders and the protocol that is followed should be the same as when requesting the services of or paying an elder.

The term "elder" has evolved over time for many First Nations people. The notion of an elder in a postsecondary setting is a new phenomenon and, as a result, many traditional people prefer to not be called elders.

While you can generally follow the above protocols that apply to elders, traditional knowledge keepers may use names or words that aren't listed above. If you have any questions, contact the [Mashkawaziwogamig Indigenous Resource Centre](#).

First language speakers

First language speakers are people who speak their Indigenous language fluently. They have a deep and comprehensive knowledge of the language and of traditional laws, ceremonies, protocols and the land, and have a worldview based on the language that should be honoured. It is the traditional worldview that existed pre-contact and is tragically being lost at a rapid pace due to colonization.

First language speakers are often requested by language teachers, as they have a wealth of knowledge and share insights into Indigenous languages with their students. They may also be asked to offer prayers in Indigenous languages for opening ceremonies and events, and are sought after for translation of signage and other important texts.

First language speakers are treasured by communities, as they hold the knowledge of languages that are being revitalized after significant language loss. They have successfully maintained traditional languages through trying times that threatened their very survival. Out of respect for that resiliency, we honour first language speakers by paying them an honorarium and offering them gifts for sharing their knowledge.

First language speakers should be paid in accordance with their expertise and time. Translating from English into Indigenous languages is a complicated and intensive process. You should respect the time and work that goes into the translation and view the costs associated with the work as you would those of any expert.

Drummers, fiddlers and singers

Drumming can be performed by big drum groups or hand drummers. It is generally used to honour a guest or event. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit all have a hand drumming tradition. First Nations also have a big drum tradition that is most commonly associated with powwows. Campus orientations, talks by important guests, grand openings and other events can incorporate a drum song. Drummers generally have a standard fee for their participation, which usually includes travel and time away from work.

First Nations drums have spirits and are sacred objects. They have three main styles: hand drums, powwow drums (big drums) and water drums. First Nations also have a tradition of rattles, although their history and use vary across cultures. Both drums and rattles have different uses in different circumstances, from social to ceremonial. Ceremonies are deeply respectful events and for that reason, this text won't address ceremonial uses of drums or rattles.

The most common use of a drum is at powwows, with the big drum being the best-known type. Big drummers at powwows are always men, although they may be accompanied by female singers standing outside the circle of seated men. First Nations big drummers live a traditional lifestyle, as the drum is sacred and representative of their culture.

Hand drummers are both men and women, and they may drum alone or in groups. There are many styles of drum songs, including honour songs, hunting songs, travel songs and songs to show gratitude.

Like the Métis, First Nations and Inuit peoples adopted fiddle music and square dancing from European settlers. At a time when people made their own entertainment, fiddling was the main form of social gathering and music in many Indigenous communities across Canada.

Inuit

There are many variations of drum dancing in Inuit Nunangat. Drum dancing typically involves one drum dancer with women singing a *pihiq* (a song). Inuit drum dance at celebrations and gatherings and tell stories through the *pihiq*. If you hire a drum dancer, they may provide an electronic recording of the *pihiq* to accompany the drum dance. Inuit also celebrate their culture through square dancing, throat singing and Inuit games. Throat singing is a competition between two women standing face-to-face, each trying to make the other laugh.

Métis

Music and dancing — often represented by fiddling and jigging — are integral aspects of Métis culture. Métis fiddling is marked by the percussive use of the bow and the distinctive tendency to “double-string” (to play with extra drone notes along with the melody), and asymmetric phrasing, or phrases of many different lengths within one tune. Although fiddling can be done at any event, it is essentially part of a social dance tradition. Jigging steps have been incorporated into a variety of old-time group dances such as the Duck Dance, Rabbit Dance, Reel of Four, Reel of Eight and Hook Dance (also called Drops of Brandy). The most well-known of Métis jigs is the Red River Jig and it, like the tune that accompanies it, has two parts, a high-pitched melody when the dancers do a basic “time” step and a low part during which dancers do one of a number of “fancy” steps.

This dance is a test of endurance and skill. Even in community settings, it has always been somewhat competitive, both in the number and complexity of fancy steps performed. While in the past, men’s and women’s steps and style were somewhat different (the women’s footwork involving smaller movements and no movement of the upper body), this is not necessarily true today. Fiddling and jigging remain an integral part of Métis culture. They are often more of a part of celebrations today, whereas in the past, they were a part of people’s daily lives.

Today, Métis fiddlers and jiggers often perform alone or, in the case of the latter, in groups. There are fiddlers and jigging troupes that perform on a regular basis and have set fees for their performances. To discuss rates and expectations, contact the musicians and dancers.



Protocol

Drummers do not need to be gifted tobacco in the way that elders do, but First Nations drummers will accept tobacco. They often place it on the ground below the drum to sanctify the earth, as well as on top of the drum. Drums are never to be placed on the ground — they must be placed on a higher table or chair. Be respectful of people's drums and don't handle them without permission.

Hand drummers may perform solo or in a group. Costs will vary depending on the number of people being asked to drum as well as the service they are providing. Groups will typically offer a group rate.

First Nations big drum group rates are generally higher, due in part to the costs associated with the transportation of the drum and the sheer number of people to coordinate. Big drum groups are in very high demand during powwow season (March to September) and generally have less availability.

Dancers



There are traditional dances and regalia specific to each Indigenous community, which vary widely across Canada.

Dancers generally dance at cultural gatherings, as well as at a variety of events, from celebrations to mourning ceremonies.

As music and dance are deeply connected, many dances can't be performed without the accompanying drummers, fiddlers or singers.

Dancers generally dance at cultural events, such as powwows, for their own personal healing and that of their communities.

If you are attending a cultural event, don't assume that you can photograph the dancers or touch their regalia without

permission. Note that it is offensive to refer to a dancer's regalia as a "costume." Use the term "regalia" or "traditional clothing."

Dancers aren't generally contacted for performances. Dancing taken out of context is generally considered to be performative and not necessarily part of Indigenous traditions. An exception is when the dancing is integrated in a more comprehensive lesson or discussion. If you would like a referral to a dancer or further information, contact the [Mashkawaziwogamig Indigenous Resource Centre](#).



Artists

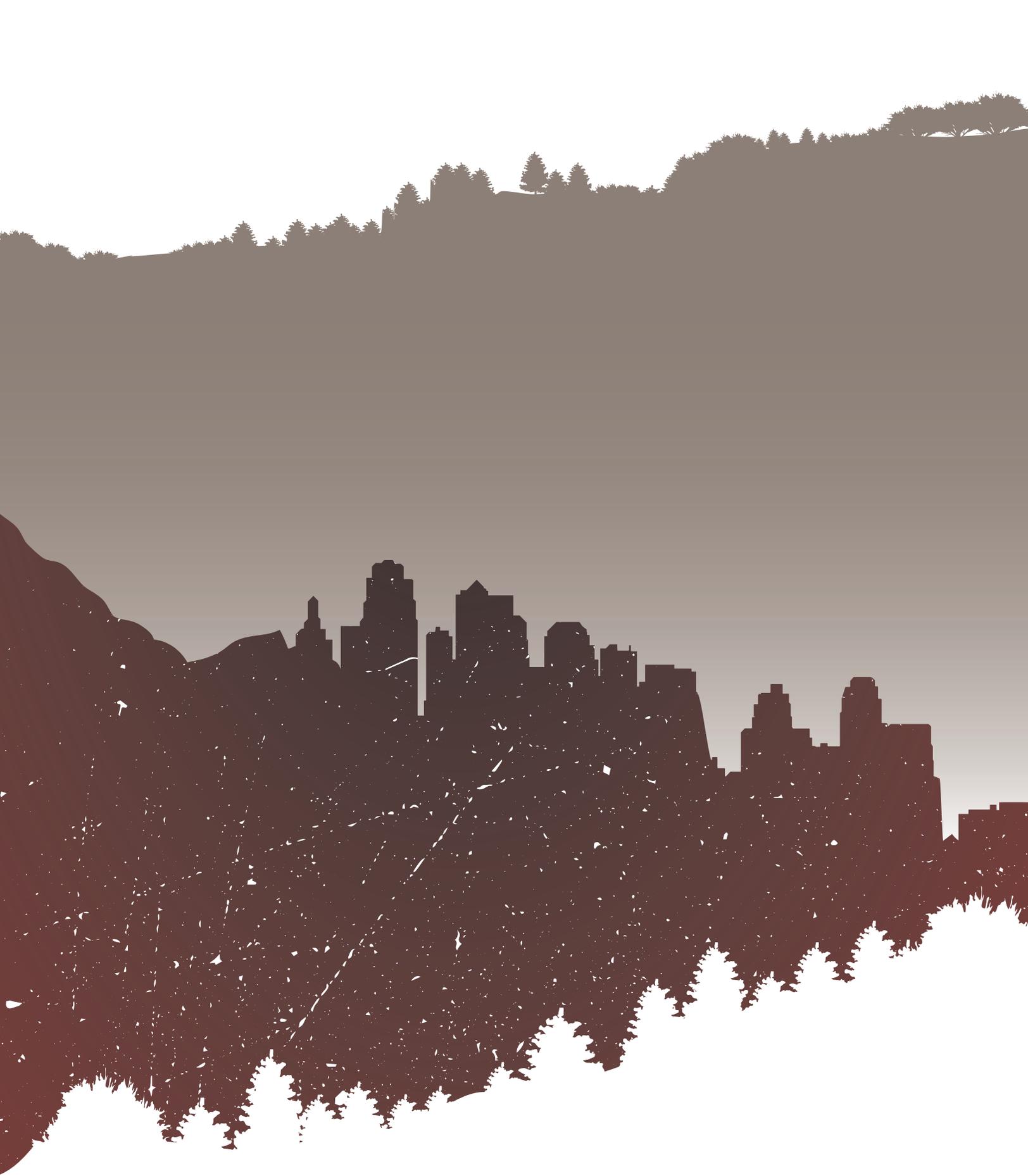
Artists are generally contacted to create art installations or be guest speakers. Indigenous artists carry on traditions of expression akin to language, dance and drumming. They should be treated in a respectful manner, as they are working very hard to revitalize and maintain their culture.

The installation of artwork on campus is governed by policies and procedures and is overseen by Facilities, which must be consulted.

The same guidelines that apply to other guests mentioned in this document apply to having an artist come to your faculty, service or department. Request their rate and invoice and have them fill out the Casual or Multiple Pay Form.

If you have any questions, contact the Indigenous Resource Centre

613-562-5800 (2496) • irc-cra@uOttawa.ca • uOttawa.ca/indigenous



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