

GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOSTING INDIGENOUS GUESTS

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for welcoming Indigenous guests to the university in a manner that strives to respect and honour the protocols of Indigenous peoples. It is important to note that the Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island (North America) have distinct histories and diverse cultural and social practices. This document provides some general suggestions; however, it is recommended that people confirm with their guests that the protocols outlined are applicable to their nation.



When booking an Indigenous guest, Indigenous Education and Cultural Services is available to help guide the process and suggest potential guests based on the needs outlined by the faculty, staff or student.

1. Extend the invitation

- Phone is preferred but email is also acceptable.
- If the request or invitation is made in person, tobacco may be offered. It is recommended that guests are asked if offering tobacco is traditional practice for them.
- Ask the guest if there is anything else they will need for or throughout their visit.
- Ask the guest what you can offer them as an honorarium. In addition, you may need to request an invoice, although if it is an Elder, most do not provide invoices.

2. Plan for the visit

- Speak with your guest regarding the number of people they are comfortable speaking with and how they would like the room set up. It is recommended that the room be set up in a circle unless it is a large group or lecture. This allows for relationship building, a safe space to be created and conversations to take place.
- Reconnect a few days prior to the visit to confirm and ask about any special requests.

3. Offer tobacco and/or gift

- For First Nations or Métis Elders and Knowledge Keepers, one should offer tobacco in the form of a tobacco tie. Please confirm that this is a customary practice with the individual guest.
- The offering should take place at the beginning of the visit. The person offering tobacco should hold the tobacco in their left hand as they make the offering and request for the presentation.
- Information on how to make a tobacco tie can be found on [YouTube: Tobacco Ties, Cassandra Beanland](#).
- If the Elder or guest accepts your tobacco, it is customary to provide another gift after their presentation to show appreciation for the knowledge they shared (low monetary value, or something from your own culture).
- Inuit prefer a gift of food (tea) or a special item from your own culture.

4. Respectful care on the day of the visit

- Ensure to coordinate a host for the Elder or Knowledge Keeper that supports them throughout the day.
- Consent must be received from the guest before any photos are taken.
- Often Elders will carry sacred items. It is very important to ask permission before touching these sacred items.
- Be sure to provide water and snacks or a meal.
- An Indigenous guest must be provided an honorarium with the gift presented at the conclusion of their visit. Please ensure the gift and honorarium are ready at the time of the event.

5. Compensation for additional costs

- Additional costs incurred by the Elder or guest, such as parking, mileage, meals and accommodations must be reimbursed.



Please contact Indigenous Education and Cultural Services (indigenous@ontariotechu.ca) if you have any questions.