



# 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. Indigenous guests may include Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers or speakers.

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.
- Please provide a minimum of 2 weeks' notice. Many Indigenous guests are extremely busy and you are encouraged to extend the invitation with as much notice as possible.
- 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. See section 3 for more information about offering tobacco.
- Ask the guest if there is anything else they will need for or throughout their visit.
- Discuss payment and request an invoice.
  - For Elders, many will not provide an invoice and an honorarium is the appropriate method of payment. Some Elders may provide you with a rate for their services, some will not. If you require support in determining an appropriate amount, please connect [with Indigenous Education and Cultural Services](#).
- Take appropriate measures to determine the intended use of pre-recorded or recorded content (i.e. appropriate compensation for replaying for future instances).

## 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.
- Arrange parking and directions ahead of time and inform the guest of these arrangements.

- If you are hosting an Indigenous guest online, ensure your guest is familiar with the platform you intend to use. Ask them ahead of time for their presentation (if they intend to use one) so someone else can present it onscreen. Set housekeeping rules such as whether they wish to take questions in the chat during their presentation, or wait until the end for a Q&A time. Ask someone to moderate the chat so the guest does not have to. If you are hoping to record the visit, please get their permission to do so beforehand.

### 3. Offer tobacco and/or gift

- For Indigenous guests, one should offer tobacco in the form of a tobacco tie. Please confirm that this is a customary practice with the individual guest. If you do not have access to a tobacco tie, contact Indigenous Education and Cultural Services to request one. To learn more about the significance of tobacco, please visit [Anishnawbe Health Toronto](#). If you wish to make your own tobacco tie, information on how to make a tobacco tie can be found on [YouTube: Tobacco Ties, Cassandra Beanland](#).
- The offering should take place when the invitation for the visit is given. If you are unable to offer the tobacco tie until the day of the presentation, offer it at the beginning of their presentation.
- The person offering tobacco should hold the tobacco in their left hand (as it is closest to your heart) as they make the offering and request. If you are unable to offer the tobacco in person, mailing it is acceptable.
- If the Elder or guest accepts your tobacco, it is customary to provide a small thank you gift (contact [Indigenous Education and Cultural Services](#) for suggestions) and the honorarium in an envelope before their presentation. Please ensure the honourarium is ready on the day of the event.
  - For the thank you gift, Inuit prefer a gift of food (or tea) or a special item from your own culture.

### 4. Respectful care on the day of the visit

- Arrange for a host for the guest to support them throughout the day until their departure. The host should greet them upon their arrival and guide them to the event location.
- Consent must be received from the guest before any photos or videos are taken, preferably prior to the day of event.
- Often Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers 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.
- It would be appreciated if a parking chit/chaser can be provided to them.
- Some guests may require helpers for driving, or helping them throughout the day. The helper would require compensation as well. If an amount is not provided by the guest, connect with [Indigenous Education and Cultural Services for support](#).

### 5. Compensation for additional costs

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

Please contact [Indigenous Education and Cultural Services](#) if you have any questions.

