

Pimòsedà – Let's Walk Together

How to respectfully engage with
First Nations, Inuit, and Métis
Knowledge Keepers

Land Acknowledgement

Algonquin College campuses in Ottawa, Perth and Pembroke are located on the traditional unceded, and unsundered territory of the Anishinàbe Algonquin People. The Algonquin People have inhabited and cared for these lands since time immemorial. We take this time to express our gratitude and respect to them and to the land for all that it has provided and will continue to provide.

As a post-secondary institution, we acknowledge the harms done to Indigenous Peoples and are committed to learning from the past. We pledge to promote healing and resilience as we move forward in partnership with the Algonquin Nations, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in a spirit of reconciliation.

While we recognize that territorial acknowledgements are only one step in cultivating greater respect for and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples, we commit to accompanying these words with actions. We are dedicated to building a future and community that is better for all. We pledge to continue exploring and making meaningful contributions to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.





Why This Guide Matters

This guide supports:

- Culturally respectful engagement with Indigenous guests
- Institutional commitment to **Indigenization and Reconciliation**
- Awareness of Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and sharing

Key Principles:

- Respect relationships over transactions
- Listen and act with humility
- Practice gratitude, not obligation
- Appreciation, not appropriation
- Honour community-driven leadership and knowledge

Who are Knowledge Keepers

Role	Respectful Considerations
Elders	Recognized by their communities for deep knowledge, cultural wisdom, and lived experience. May guide spiritually, emotionally, or culturally. Not always elderly.
Traditional Knowledge Keepers	Invite only for cultural education, not performance; regalia is sacred; avoid photography without consent.
First Language Speakers	Fluent speakers who preserve and teach Indigenous languages, worldview, and cultural practices
Artists, Drummers, Dancers	Share cultural expression through visual art, music, movement, and performance. Contribute to community identity and celebration.



Preparing to Invite an Elder or Knowledge Keeper to Algonquin College

Before Reaching Out:

- Confirm your budget, date(s), location, and space accessibility
- Consider partnering with another department to maximize the Knowledge Keeper's visit and cost
- Reach out early, many Knowledge Keepers are in high demand

If unsure who to invite, reach out to:

Mamidosewin Indigenous Student Centre

613-727-4723 x7186

mamidosewin@algonquincollege.com

or

Anita Tenasco

Director of Indigenous Initiatives

tenasca@algonquincollege.com.

Extending an Invitation

Protocol:

- Request a meeting or call to discuss your invitation in person
- If an in-person invitation is not possible, send an email or carry out a phone call and indicate that tobacco or a small gift will be offered when the in-person session takes place.
- Present a tobacco tie (for First Nations/Métis) during the invitation
- Offer compensation and support for paperwork

Cultural Offering – Tobacco (Nasemà)

In many First Nations and Métis communities:

- Tobacco is sacred and used as an offering when requesting teachings or guidance
- Called nasemà in Anishinàbemowin (Algonquin language)
- Symbolizes respect, gratitude, and the beginning of a relationship

Guidelines:

- Do not handle sacred items under the influence of drugs/alcohol
- Use traditional tobacco when possible (available at Beaded Dreams or Turtle Lodge Trading Post)
- Present tobacco with both hands and place it respectfully when making your request
- Inuit Knowledge Keepers do not use tobacco—offer a small cultural gift instead

Honoraria & Compensation

Knowledge Keepers are not employees. Honoraria show respect for their time and teachings.

Suggested Rates:

- \$250 / hour minimum
- \$800–\$1200 /day
- Travel & parking:
 - \$100 (within Ottawa/Gatineau)
 - \$200 (outside region)

Additional Costs:

- Materials for activities or crafting
- Meals if present for 3+ hours
- Assistance with travel (pickup, directions)

Payment Process:

1. Contact your department's financial officer to check for a Workday account
2. Request an invoice from the Elder or Knowledge Keeper
3. Help them fill out Contractor registration form





Photography, Video & Sacred Objects

- Always ask permission before taking photos or recording
- Do not touch regalia, drums, or sacred items without consent
- Some ceremonies (e.g., smudging, lighting the qulliq) should not be recorded

Specific Roles and Protocols

Role	Respectful Considerations
Drummers	Offer tobacco; drums should not touch the ground; never handle without permission
Dancers	Invite for cultural education and not only performance; regalia is sacred; avoid photography without consent
Artists	Engage as experts; same protocols apply as with Knowledge Keepers and Elders
Language Speakers	Pay appropriately; translation is complex and culturally significant work

If Plans Change

Elders or Knowledge Keepers may cancel due to health or community responsibilities.
Always have a **respectful backup plan** (alternate speaker, rescheduling, recorded content)
Be understanding and thank them regardless

Want to promote your event?

Contact the communications department to attend, take photos or share on myAC and social media.
If possible, reach out in advance once the event date is set to confirm their attendance.

Need Support or Guidance?

Mamidosewin Indigenous Student Centre
Room E122, First Floor, Student Commons
613-727-4723 x7186 or mamidosewin@algonquincollege.com
or contact the **Office of Indigenous Initiatives** Director, Anita Tenasco,
tenasca@algonquincollege.com

Additional Resources

- [Indigenous Glossary](#) – Refer to this guide to ensure proper spelling and capitalization of Indigenous words and vocabulary.
- [Kwey Language Series](#) – Over 50 videos available with words and phrases, including greetings.
- [Land Acknowledgements](#) – Samples are available. Select the one appropriate for your event.

