

Elder Honorarium Guidelines – Queen’s University

It is imperative for those requesting Elder services to understand the true value of the ask. Each time you request the presence of an Elder at your event, whether it is to provide an opening, translate a document, etc. you are asking them to share a part of themselves with you and your audience. It is important to consider the emotional, physical, and spiritual impact such an ask may have. As well, it is important to consider whether there will be preparation required prior to the event that the Elder will be responsible for.

Monetary Compensation:

Activity	Suggested Amount
Opening prayer; Welcome to the Territory	\$150
Performance i.e., Hand drum singers, men’s drumming group, etc.	\$125/performer/hour. Varies depending on event and performer preference (see #5 below).
Ceremony/Teaching/Committee Work:	
Half-day event	\$300
Full-day event	\$600
Translation fees	\$1.00/word

1. The customary protocol of offering tobacco: The traditional tobacco should be wrapped and tied in a small bundle (piece of fabric) – this is referred to as a Tobacco Tie. When offering tobacco, use your left hand to place the tobacco in front of them and state your request. The Elder will indicate acceptance of your request by picking up or taking the tobacco from your hand. Traditional tobacco is available at the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre. For others, after the service has been provided, it is customary to provide an honorarium plus coverage of travel or accommodation costs to show your appreciation for this person’s time and the teachings that were shared. Parking fees and meals may also be provided for those who must travel a distance.

Website recommendation for ordering tobacco:
<https://motherearthtobacco.com/ceremonial-tobacco-products.html>

2. Gifts for Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Cultural Advisors were traditionally a means of support that would be used to feed, clothe, and provide shelter for ones-self and one’s family. While historically gifts of food or other essentials were provided for their help, today

an honorarium is acceptable. A meaningful gift of appreciation may be given in addition to an honorarium dependent on the type of work and time commitment that has been fulfilled. For information on paying/gifting Elders, please visit “Payments to Indigenous Elders/Participants” on the [Financial Services website](#).

3. Travel and Accommodation: There is no set amount that you should provide, the current rate provided by Queen’s University is per diem \$75.00/day plus coverage of travel and accommodation costs (if applicable). We encourage giving what people or groups can afford being mindful of the ask being made of the Elder/Knowledge Keeper/Community member. Travel and accommodation costs are generally per the QU [Travel & Expense Reimbursement Policy](#). It is important to be mindful of policies & procedures of Indigenous communities & organizations that may differ from these rates.

4. Equity: We ask you to recognize that Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Cultural Advisors are acknowledged at the very least, the same level as visiting scholars and academics, therefore their honoraria should be the same or comparable.

5. Customary Fees: It is also important to determine if the visiting Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Cultural Advisor, or Performer has an expectation regarding the amount of honorarium and if so to honour that as their customary fee.

The Indigenous Cultural Services staff members within the Office of Indigenous Initiatives are paid by Queen’s University and therefore are unable to accept honorarium payments; however, we do encourage those requesting cultural services to follow traditional protocol by offering tobacco to show your gratitude and appreciation for their time when making your request. A meaningful gift may be offered to show appreciation as well.

Departments, faculties, and organizations within the university are responsible for the booking, coordinating, and planning of these visits. If you are looking for a recommendation on who to invite for a specific event or engagement, please contact the Office of Indigenous Initiatives.

