

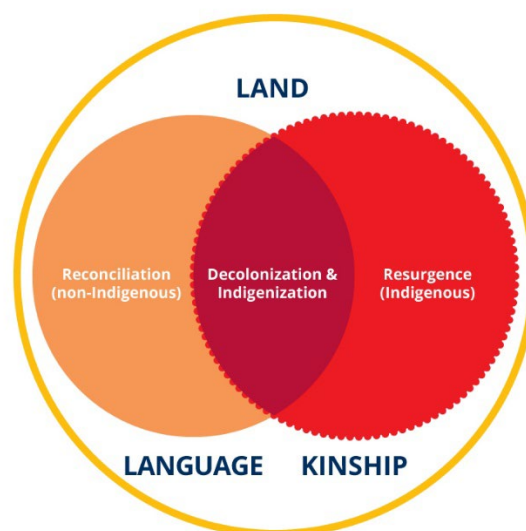
Guidelines for respectful engagement in reconciliation work

This document serves as a guide for respectful practices and acceptable engagement during any classes, events, programming, or initiatives regarding reconciliation, throughout the year and during the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR). This guide is intended to guide work done year-round, with the expectation that reconciliation is an ongoing process. This guide may be used by all members of the Queen's community (staff, faculty, students, alum), to clarify the roles of reconciliation, encourage not overburdening Indigenous peoples, and ensuring respectful protocols are followed.

"Reconciliation is not something that government can legislate into reality and it's not something Indigenous people can force on the rest of Canada. Every person in Canada — every citizen, every immigrant, every refugee, and every visitor — is responsible for Reconciliation."

Senator Murray Sinclair

*Former Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Canada
(Indigenous Innovation, 2019)*



What is reconciliation? And what role should you hold?

At its core, **reconciliation** is about developing and maintaining respectful, considerate, and mutually beneficial relationships. According to Dr. Kim Anderson, reconciliation is also about Land, Language, and Kinship. This is particularly true for Indigenous Peoples, many of whom have been displaced from their homelands over history; those who have lost their languages due to residential schools and government policies and churches; and those who have become distanced from their traditional forms of kinship and relationships, due to the same reasons. Generations of people have been affected by the residential school system and are still finding their way back to their original teachings.

As we have come to understand it, **Reconciliation** is primarily the work of Canadians (or other non-Indigenous people). **Resurgence** is largely the work of Indigenous Peoples who work on reclaiming and reviving our languages, cultures; our ways of knowing and being. The juncture of the two is the work of decolonizing and Indigenizing – of unlearning and relearning and that is the work encouraged and supported by the Office of Indigenous Initiatives.

What is respectful engagement with reconciliation work and Indigenous communities?

Respectful engagement with reconciliation work ensures that as a non-Indigenous person, as an **ally**, you are assuming the correct role and not placing the burden on your Indigenous colleagues, students, and community members.

While the focus should always be on uplifting and providing space for Indigenous voices, it must be on their own terms and not through pressure or fear.

This means not burdening Indigenous peoples with requests to speak about residential schools, reconciliation, or Indigenous history, specifically during the month of September leading up to NDTR.

For faculty, this means **not** calling on to speak or singling out Indigenous students during your discussions of reconciliation, residential schools, or Indigenous history. If a student feels comfortable speaking on these topics, they will engage in the discussion on their own. At no time is it appropriate to single them out in front of their peers on such a complex, deeply painful topic.

For staff, this could mean committing to supporting your Indigenous colleagues in their work through an allyship lens.

For all members of the Queen's community, respectful engagement means committing to your own education of Indigenous histories and current realities and not relying on Indigenous peoples to educate you themselves.

Respectful engagement during the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

During the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, it is important to look at your roles in allyship, in supporting Indigenous colleagues and students, and engaging respectfully with events and ceremony.

When attending events on campus, please be mindful and respect the requests of organizers, Indigenous Elders or Knowledge Keepers, and the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. **Please do not at any time take a photo or video of the sacred fire on September 30th, or at any event with a ceremonial fire. This will be explained before the fire but is an issue that still occurs every year.**

One of the best things you can do if you are unsure about protocol or best practice – ask. During certain events (year-round and in September), a smudge *may* be offered when you arrive. If you are unsure of how to participate in a smudge, please ask the person offering, or politely decline if you do not wish to participate. Another medicine that may be offered during events is tobacco. The process will always be explained, to hold it in your left hand, and then it will be collected, or you may distribute it in the fire yourself. Please always listen for proper instructions and again, ask if you are unsure.

Part of doing this work **together** is being able to learn and (un)learn from each other. In doing this work alongside one another, we create a balance that must be maintained to ensure the responsibilities do not sway too heavily to one side.

Please note that there is an academic activity suspension in place for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation each year. This policy applies to all Academic Activities within every Faculty and School at the University.

What is the protocol for inviting or engaging with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and guests?

There are specific protocols that need to be followed when inviting an Indigenous Elder or Knowledge Keeper to campus, to your event, a class, etc.

1. Offer an Invitation

- a. We recommend making a request in person when possible, however; when that is not feasible, it is acceptable to make a request by telephone or email. If making the request in person, you would first offer tobacco as this is following traditional protocol. If the request was made by telephone or email, tobacco can be offered at the first meeting.
- b. During this initial request, it is important to lead with good intentions and state those early on. Ensure you know why you are inviting the Elder or Knowledge Keeper, and not just to check a box.

2. Planning for the Visit

- a. Ask the guest if they have any accommodations to be aware of, or if there is anything that you can offer to make their visit to campus more comfortable.
 - i. **Elders or Knowledge Keepers may also be travelling with a helper, please confirm this with them and plan to cover costs for this person as well.**
- b. Discuss the intent of the request, the audience involved and ask the guest if they are comfortable with what is being proposed.
- c. Ask the guest if they have a preference for room setup – i.e. should the room be setup in a circle format? Facilitating sessions in a circle creates a safe and open environment where everyone is equal around the circle.
- d. If the guest will be driving to campus, provide them with a campus map as well as, arrange for parking if possible. If the guest requires transportation to be arranged, make the necessary arrangements as needed.

i. Plan to meet the invited guest in a central location on campus to help them navigate from parking to your event/classroom location.

- e. Provide the guest with a main contact for their visit –this person will host the guest throughout the day. Additionally, we recommend providing the guest with the contact person’s phone number if they need assistance on their way to campus.
- f. Prepare to gift the guest at the end of their visit and/or submit a claim to process an honorarium payment and reimbursement of travel or accommodation (for guests external to Queen’s).

3. Honorarium

- a. 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 preparation will be required prior to the event that the Elder will be responsible for.

How do I go beyond the check box, to further advance reconciliation and support cultural resurgence and Indigenization on campus?

Going beyond ‘the check box’, means doing more than the standard, everyday tasks that you should already be doing. Providing a land acknowledgement would not be considered going above and beyond, nor is it considered Indigenous ceremony or traditional practice.

Going beyond the check box means removing yourself from performative allyship and digging deeper into intentional, meaningful engagement. What can you do to commit yourself to your own education of Indigenous peoples, histories, current realities, and ongoing issues? In what way can you support Indigenous peoples and causes?

In your research, if done in an Indigenous community, it must **involve** community. Research should never be **on** or **for** Indigenous people but always **with** Indigenous consultation and collaboration.

On campus, consider taking the personal initiative to incorporate more Indigenous perspectives and voices in your meetings, events, and courses. Do your own research on credible, respected Indigenous guests and consider inviting them respectfully, to incorporate their knowledge into your courses or department meetings.

Resources and more information

There are many resources available on campus to support your learning, (un)learning, and research with community, including the library, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and the VP Research. Below are a few additional resources to support the above information and your commitment to respectful engagement.

Policy on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation:

<https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/policy-national-day-truth-and-reconciliation>

<https://www.queensu.ca/indigenous/truth-and-reconciliation>

<https://www.queensu.ca/indigenous/ways-knowing/protocols-indigenous-guests>

<https://www.queensu.ca/indigenous/decolonizing-and-indigenizing/being-ally>

<https://www.queensu.ca/vpr/resources/indigenous-research>

<https://www.queensu.ca/indigenous/decolonizing-and-indigenizing/community-research-partnerships-training>

<https://www.queensu.ca/financialservices/our-services/payroll/making-payments>