



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Implementation plan for the deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin: Indigenous Truth Policy

Office of the Vice Provost, Indigenous Engagement

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BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

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1.a. Land Acknowledgement

The land is acknowledged as our Mother, the Earth. USask is committed to upholding the *Indigenous peoples, cultures, values, and languages that belong to the land of Treaty 6 Territory and Homeland of the Métis. USask is committed to working towards mending colonized lands and protecting the land in a way that demonstrates honor, respect, and love. USask extends this commitment to the lands and Treaty territories (Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10) that constitute kisiskâciwan (Saskatchewan), and all Indigenous people that call kisiskâciwan home. We are born to the land and the land claims us.

1.b. deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin: Indigenous Truth

The name of this policy means truth – truth to self, truth to each other, truth to the ancestors and truth to the land. The intent of deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin (Saulteaux, Michif, Cree) is to protect Indigenous truth and space for everyone.

1.c. Purpose

The deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin policy provides a framework for the implementation of Indigenous membership/citizenship verification with documentation at the University of Saskatchewan.

The University of Saskatchewan is committed to safeguarding the cultures and integrity of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous values, and Indigenous languages within university business or activities.

It is recognized that the University of Saskatchewan is committed to transformative decolonization leading to reconciliation. In an effort to honour, protect and support Indigenous peoples, we establish this policy to safeguard Indigenous spaces, Indigenous voices, and Indigenous resources.

This policy conveys the university's commitment to:

- reconciliation and recognition of the Indigenous right to determine their own membership/citizenship in accordance with their governance, customs, traditions, and procedures;
- safeguard Indigenous peoples, cultures, values, and languages within University of Saskatchewan spaces of business and activities; and
- implementation of Indigenous membership/citizenship verification with **documentation.

1.d. Principles

The development of this policy was an Indigenous led and informed task force that included Elders, Knowledge Keepers, cultural advisors, faculty, staff, students, and community members. The implementation of the policy will be guided by the sacred teachings that led the work of the taskforce: **respect, love, truth, humility, courage, honesty**, and bringing these teachings together to create grounded **wisdom**. Having the policy grounded in the sacred teachings inspires a respectful and inclusive space for those who utilize and engage with the deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin policy.

The university is committed to achieving reconciliation which requires, and is not limited to, a recognition of Indigenous self-government, sovereign and inherent rights, law, perspectives, and rights as critical components of relationships. The University of Saskatchewan is committed to Indigenization and has woven this thread into the University Plan 2025 and the Vision, Mission, and Values policy. The University of Saskatchewan is committed to achieving reconciliation which requires, and is not limited to, a recognition of the Indigenous sovereign right to determine membership/citizenship in accordance with their governance, customs, traditions, and procedures.

The seven fundamental commitments of ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan (Let's fly up together), the Indigenous Strategy which was gifted to the University of Saskatchewan, will guide the policy implementation. The commitments of **Safety, Wellness, Stewardship, Representation, Right Relations, Creation, and Renewal** will guide the University of Saskatchewan in becoming not only the *University the World Needs*, but also embraces nîkânîtân manācihitowinihk | ni manachîhitoonaan (Let us lead with respect).

1.e. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all members of the university community including, but not limited to, students, researchers, post-doctoral fellows, staff, faculty, institutional leadership, members of governing bodies, Elders, Cultural Advisors, and Knowledge Keepers, and any person participating in university business or activities (e.g., service provider, contractor, volunteer).

1.f. Policy

The University of Saskatchewan will implement Indigenous membership/citizenship verification with documentation, under the terms described in this policy.

Verification of documentation will be required for all incoming assertions of Indigenous membership/citizenship by members of the university community where that claim may result in a material advantage or where the absence of verification would be otherwise contrary to the principles recognized in this policy.

For Indigenous membership/citizenship assertions that have occurred before this policy came into effect, verification will also be required where there is reason to question the authenticity of that claim and where that prior assertion has resulted in material advantage, or where the absence of verification would be otherwise contrary to the principles recognized in this policy.

The verification of documentation process is described in the implementation procedures [See below] associated with this policy and recognizes the inherent rights of self-determination and self-governance of Indigenous governments. A Standing Committee will be constituted to support implementation.

The deybwewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin Standing Committee is accountable to:

- guide the implementation plan to align with the approved policy;
- ensure the plan is grounded in the sacred teachings to provide respectful and inclusive space for those that utilize and engage with the deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin policy;

The Provost, through the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement is accountable to:

- manage this policy including implementation, policy education, monitoring, review, and amendment; and
- care for and animate deybwewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin responsibilities and principles associated with the policy.

All members of the university community share the responsibility for upholding the policy to protect Indigenous space (e.g. Indigenous specific positions, funding, scholarships, etc.) for Indigenous people at the University of Saskatchewan.

1.g. Policy Implementation

The University of Saskatchewan is committed to this policy's implementation, assessment, amendments, and education. The Provost, through the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement is responsible for implementation.

The University of Saskatchewan community will be supported to ensure understanding of how to navigate the deybwewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin policy.

The deybwewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin Standing Committee guides and supports the process of sharing and implementing the policy. The deybwewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin Standing Committee oversees sustaining the principles of the policy.

1.h. Compliance

Demonstrating commitment and action toward safeguarding Indigenous peoples, Indigenous cultures, Indigenous values, Indigenous integrity and languages within the University of Saskatchewan spaces and resources requires reflection, active learning, and the verification of membership/citizenship documentation. As such, application of this policy will focus on providing the education, resources, and support to meet the verification of membership/citizenship documentation accountabilities as outlined. All members of the university community are expected to understand the need to safeguard Indigenous peoples, Indigenous cultures, Indigenous values, and Indigenous languages within the University of Saskatchewan spaces and resources and as such are responsible for the implementation of such within their scope of influence and authority.

Formal complaints under this policy will be directed to the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement for resolution. See 'Related Documents'.

Related Documents:

University of Saskatchewan Policies:

- University of Saskatchewan Mission, Vision and Values
- Employment Practices Policy
- Discrimination and Harassment Prevention
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Conflict of Interest
- Fraud Deterrence Policy
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy
- Safe Disclosure Policy
- Living our Values Policy
- Standard of Student Conduct in Non-Academic Matters and Procedures for Resolution of Complaints and Appeals

Associated Documents and Knowledges:

- ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan (Let's fly up together)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Canadian Human Rights Act
- Employment Equity Act
- The Saskatchewan Employment Act
- The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Métis Nation —Saskatchewan MOU regarding Métis citizenship
- Collective agreements
- Traditions of the Métis, Cree, Saulteaux, Inuit, and Matriarchs of the Indigenous communities

1.j. Glossary

* Indigenous: the term Indigenous in this document reflects The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([UNDRIP](#)) definition: “Indigenous peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic, and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live.” Further, UNDRIP describes the right of Indigenous communities to determine their own membership in accordance with their customs and traditions.

**** Documentation:** as defined by Indigenous governments and conveyed to the deybwewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin Standing Committee.

Implementation Plan

Indigenous membership/citizenship verification

The University of Saskatchewan's deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin policy provides a framework for the implementation of Indigenous membership/citizenship verification with documentation. The University of Saskatchewan is committed to safeguarding the cultures and integrity of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous values, and Indigenous languages within the university.

Verification with documentation can take many forms. These will be defined by Indigenous governments and conveyed to the deybwewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin Standing Committee. Examples of verification with documentation can be, and are not limited to, a letter from a Nation's governance body or registrar, an Indigenous government-issued membership or citizenship card, or a status card issued by Indigenous Services Canada.

The No Documentation option is only available for those whose Indigenous communities do not participate in colonial documentation.

Please note that the no documentation option is not implemented/enacted in situations where individuals are awaiting applications for membership/citizenship or non-status in Canada. The University of Saskatchewan recognizes and honours the sovereign and inherent right of Indigenous governments to determine membership/citizenship; membership/citizenship and documentation for verification is determined and defined by Indigenous governments.

Implementation timeline:

Due to the success and uptake of the policy and portal, implementation has shifted to full implementation in all aspects of University of Saskatchewan rather than a phased approach. Initially, concerns regarding student accessibility prompted the thought to allow time for students to obtain documentation, however, the secure portal via PAWS has shown students as the largest and fastest growing population of participants.

Rationale:

Membership/citizenship vs. identity

- It is not about verification or determining a person's identity.
 - Identity is personal, cultural, and multidimensional.

- **This process is not about verifying a persons' identity.**
- The deybwewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin policy seeks membership/citizenship verification with documentation.
- When referring to this policy and this work, avoid using the word identity. Consistency in language is key.

Self-declare vs. verified (students only)

- Need for distinction in all reporting: reasons to continue to use self-declaration:
 - Reporting of overall Indigenous **students** for grants, federal funding, rankings, etc. Without proceeding through the verification process students will NOT be eligible for Indigenous specific scholarships, awards, etc.
 - ***All University of Saskatchewan self-declared data must have distinction to differentiate between verified data and unverified data.
- Simplistic explanation of this process
 - Two approaches:
 - Self-declare/Not verified-NO access to any Indigenous *resources/space
 - Verified-access to Indigenous *resources/space

*Examples of resources-scholarships, Indigenous specific roles, awards, bursaries, Indigenous specific programs and seats, etc.

All employees and students seeking Indigenous space

- Verification of membership/citizenship documentation will be required for all incoming assertions of Indigenous membership/citizenship by members of the university community where that claim may result in a *material advantage or where the absence of verification would be otherwise contrary to the principles recognized in this policy. This would include, **but not limited to**:
 - students,
 - researchers,
 - post-doctoral fellows,
 - staff,
 - faculty,
 - institutional leadership,
 - members of governing bodies,
 - USask Board of Governors and Senate
 - Elders,
 - Cultural Advisors,
 - Knowledge Keepers,
 - and any person participating in university business or activities (e.g., service provider, contractor, volunteer).

* Material advantage includes, but is not limited to, scholarships, awards, bursaries, Indigenous specific positions, non-Indigenous specific positions, seats in Indigenous student programs, etc.

Recruitment (employment)

- Consistency is crucial
 - Utilize the Application Tracking System (ATS)
 - Consistent wording on ALL job posting (by selecting 'Indigenous specific position' the boiler plate language required will be automatically included)
 - Indigenous specific and non-Indigenous
 - Refer to the Guide to the deybawewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin: Indigenous Truth Policy Verification of Documentation Process for Indigenous Candidates
 - Consistent wording on all contracts for Indigenous specific positions.
 - Contingent on verification (use boiler plate language required by Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement through ConnectionPoint)
 - *Verification must occur prior to interview
 - Striving to increase communications between systems across campus (i.e. ATS, Banner, ConnectionPoint, etc.)
 - The online verification portal and deybawewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin website are managed by the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement.
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Process of Verification:

- Applicant will be directed to the verification website through the USask PAWS or Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement website.
 - Information for applicants will be housed on the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement website for reference.
 - Applicant will log into the secure online verification system via PAWS and proceed through the menu options and upload their documentation.
 - Please notify Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement via email (indigenoustruthpolicy@usask.ca) if documentation requires immediate review. This email should include:
 - First and last name
 - NSID (if applicable)
 - Reason for requiring (ie. scholarship, Indigenous specific program admission, etc.)
 - **Please note the Office of the Vice Provost Indigenous Engagement will not review documentation if the individual has not been informed.**
 - The applicant file will be reviewed by the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement staff who work directly on implementation aspects of the policy. After review, the individual's file will be processed to either a *verified/Conditionally*
-

verified status, or if additional attention is required, it will change to a *pending* status where further action will be requested and details provided directly to the individual.

- The deybwewin|taapwaywin|tapwewin Standing Committee will be called for cases in which special consideration and review may be called for.

Documentation for Verification

It is the sovereign and inherit right of Indigenous governments to determine the membership/citizenship of their communities. The University of Saskatchewan recognizes and honours this sovereign right through the verification process.

Verification with documentation can take many forms. These will be defined by Indigenous governments and conveyed to the deybwewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin Standing Committee. Examples of verification with documentation can be, and are not limited to, a letter from a community's governance body, an Indigenous government-issued membership or citizenship card, or a status card issued by Indigenous Services Canada.

***All documentation must be current, valid.**

- **Métis (One of the follow documents)**

- Letter from MN-S stating the individual has met the criteria for citizenship from the registrar.

OR

- MN-S Citizenship card

*No local citizenship/membership cards will be accepted.

- **First Nations**

- Documentation is to be determined by each First Nations government.
- Documentation should be up to date.
- If an agreement has not yet been reached with your Nation, BOTH a status card and a verification letter will be required.
- “Conditionally verified” For Nations we do not yet have agreements with status will say conditional upon verification of agreement with your Nation. This is only temporary until an agreement is reached. To expedite the change of your status to verified, you may upload a letter from your registrar confirming your membership.
- If you are a non-status First Nations individual, we kindly ask that you provide a letter from the Nation you are connected to. This letter should confirm your relationship and connection to the community.
- If you are having trouble uploading your documents, please save your documents as pdf's and try uploading them again.

- We seek to create and maintain agreements with First Nations governments. First Nations governments outside Saskatchewan will be contacted as needed.
- **Inuit**
 - Membership of one the 4 collectives defined by the Inuit Kapiirit Kanatami (ITK) from Section 1.4 of the Inuit Nunangat Policy, C-IRNAC):
 - The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (*Inuvialuit Final Agreement*)
 - Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (*Nunavut Agreement*)
 - Makivik Corporation (*James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement*)
 - The Nunatsiavut Government (*Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement*)
- **International**
 - USA: Tribal Enrollment cards with Bureau of Indian Affairs assigned numbers and consultation with Indigenous community directly.
 - Indigenous communities outside Turtle Island (Māori, Hawaiian, Indigenous from Australia, etc.) will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- **No Documentation**
 - Please note the ‘no documentation’ option is only available for communities which do not have formal, western options for documentation. In Canada, Métis, First Nations, and Inuit communities all have membership/citizenship documentation.
 - In the absence of documentation due to displacement or colonization, a signed/sworn notarized/legal affidavit outlining the following will be gathered and submitted to the Standing Committee for consideration. This legal document will include:
 - the lineage and connection to said community (personal narrative),
 - historical and geographical account of membership to community.
 - Additional documents to accompany signed/sworn notarized/legal affidavit:
 - two (minimum) community references bearing witness to the applicant’s membership to said community.

- one reference by a member of the community who has personal history with the applicant,
- and one reference to be solicited by the University.

**This process will be guided by a good heart and understanding and handled with care and respect of the individual and the community. The decisions made by the Standing Committee, as directed by the policy/Provost/university standards, and with the guidance of the individuals' community, cannot be overturned.

All members of the university community share the responsibility for upholding the policy to protect Indigenous space (e.g. Indigenous specific positions, funding, scholarships, etc.) for Indigenous people at the University of Saskatchewan.

Safety of documentation

- Ensuring confidentiality gains trust and builds safety.
- No one outside of OVPIE will have access to documents or the individual's information.
- These standards align with, and go above, university privacy standards.
 - Information and documentation collected in the verification system will be used only for the purpose for which it was gathered.
 - Documentation and details are not shared, only verified, conditionally verified, or pending are shared as required.

Process for Reporting Untruths

These queries are to be sent directly to the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement. All will be held in confidence and individuals will be protected.