



**UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN**

**Implementation Plan for the  
deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin: Indigenous truth  
Policy**

**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 taskforce that included Elders, Knowledge Keepers, cultural advisors, faculty, staff, students and community members. 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, 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 right to determine their own membership/citizenship in accordance with their governance, customs, traditions, and procedures.

The seven fundamental commitments of the *ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan* (Let's fly up together), the Indigenous Strategy 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 *nīkānītān manācihitowinihk | ni manachihiitoonaan* (Let us lead with respect).

#### 1.e. Scope of this 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 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 communities. A Standing Committee will be constituted to support implementation.

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

- develop 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;
- operationalize the plan over the two to five years following policy approval;

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 documentation. As such, application of this policy will focus on providing the education, resources, and support to meet the verification of 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’.

## 1.i. Related Documents

### i. 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 Policy](#)
- [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](#)

### ii. 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

- Indigenous Voices on Indigenous Identity, report from the March 2022 Forum, published by the National Indigenous University Senior Leaders Association and First Nations University of Canada, June 2022

## 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.

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## Implementation Plan

### 2. 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 community’s governance body, an Indigenous government-issued membership or citizenship card, or a status card issued by Indigenous Services Canada.

In situations where Indigenous government-approved documentation is not available, the deybwewin | tapwewin | taapwaywin Standing Committee will guide and support the individual and the university through a verification process.

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## 3. Rationale

### Membership/citizenship vs. Identity

- We are not determining a person's identity.
  - Identity is personal, cultural, and multidimensional.
  - **This process is not about verifying a persons’ identity.**

- We are seeking membership/citizenship verification with documentation.
- When referring to this policy and this work, do not use 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.
    - \*Distinction must be added to differentiate between verified data and self-declared data.
- Simplistic explanation of this process
  - Two approaches:
    - Self-declare -NO access to any Indigenous \*resources/spaces
    - Verified-access to Indigenous \*resources/spaces

\*Examples of Resources: scholarships, Indigenous specific roles, etc.

### All Employees and Students seeking Indigenous Space

- 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. 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)

- Importance of consistency
  - Application Tracking System (ATS)
  - Consistent wording on ALL job posting (use deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin phrasing and language required by the Office of the Vice Provost Indigenous Engagement (OVPIE) through ConnectionPoint and the ATS)
    - Indigenous specific and non-Indigenous
  - Consistent wording on all contracts for Indigenous specific positions.

- Contingent on verification (use phrasing and language required by OVPIE through ConnectionPoint)
- Increased communications between systems across campus (i.e. ATS, Banner, ConnectionPoint, etc.)
- The online verification system and Office of the Vice Provost, Indigenous Engagement website are managed by the OVPIE.

#### 4. Implementation Timeline:

- 1-5 years for complete implementation
  - Phase 1
    - Education: Presentations and webinars to key stakeholders.
    - Launch online system and website (February 2023)
    - Mandatory use of the Application Tracking System (ATS) for ALL hires (staff, faculty, students).
    - Work with all portfolios across campus on consistency and implementation.
    - Work through the evolution of improving the online verification system.
    - Begin volunteer verification (all those willing and ready to proceed).
    - Work with external Indigenous partners and seek agreements, MOU's, and Band Council Resolutions (BCR) supporting the Truth Policy. These agreements will outline the documentation each Indigenous government will ask USask to require.
    - Begin mapping potential data collection, usage and reporting.
  - Phase 2 (approx. September 2023)
    - Establish deadlines for verification process of administrators, staff and faculty.
    - Continue education across campus and targeted sessions for students and student support teams across the university.
  - Phase 3 (approx. January 2024)
    - Establish deadlines for verification process for students.
    - Continued education across campus.
    - Student information sessions.
    - Analysis of the process and informed change of the system.

#### 5. Process of Verification

- Applicant/employee will be directed to the verification website through the USask PAWS or Office of the Vice Provost Indigenous Engagement (OVPIE) website.
  - Resources for applicant/employees/students will be housed on the OVPIE website for reference.
- Applicant /employee/student will log into PAWS and navigate to the online verification system and proceed through the menu options and upload their documentation.
- Once the applicant /employee/student has completed navigating through and uploading documentation OVPIE will be notified via the online verification system.
- The Office of the Vice Provost, Indigenous Engagement will manage the verification process.
  - The applicant /employee/student file will be reviewed only by select OVPIE staff. After review, the individual's file will be processed to either a *verified* status, or if additional attention is required they will be moved to a *pending* status where further action will be requested.
- The deybwewin|taapwaywin|tapwewin Standing Committee will be called for cases which may require special consideration.



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## 6. Acceptable 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.

**\*All documentation must be current, valid and up-to-date.**

- **Métis**

- **One of the follow documents:**

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

- MN-S Citizenship card

\*No local citizenship/membership cards will be accepted.

- **First Nations**

- Determined by each First Nation government

- Valid Treaty/Status Card
- Non-Status-to be determined by Tribal Councils/governments and the Standing Committee.

\*Expired cards will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- **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 governments directly.
- Indigenous communities outside Turtle Island (Māori, Hawaiian, Indigenous from Australia, etc.) will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

- **No 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),
- account of historical and geographical location of membership and connection to the Indigenous 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, and university standards and with the guidance of the individual’s 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.

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## **7. Safety of Personal information and Documentation Collected**

- Ensuring privacy gains trust and builds safety.
- Only select members of OVPIE will have access to documents or the individual’s information.
- Privacy standards will align with university privacy standards.
  - Information and documentation collected in the verification system will be used only for the purpose for which it was gathered.

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## **8. Process for Reporting Untruths**

- These queries will be submitted through the online verification system in a confidential manner and adhering to the privacy policies of the university. All queries will be reviewed and handled by select OVPIE members. The Standing Committee will be called in the event further guidance and action is required.