A GUIDE TO ACKNOWLEDGING TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

RATIONALE

As the journey towards reconciliation at the university continues, and we strive to fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) calls to action, it is important that we continue to build relationships and engage in ongoing education.

Reconciliation and allyship is a continuous process and one that we all need to engage in fully. With this in mind, we must take every appropriate opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territory on which the university resides. Acknowledging the traditional territory is one way to express our respect, gratitude and appreciation for the Indigenous people who have inhabited and continue to live on the land we have been welcomed to share. It is recognition of their presence both in the past and the present. Recognition helps to create a welcome and safe environment for Indigenous students, their families and community members.

BEST PRACTICES

- The only people who should welcome others to the territory are the First Nations people who are traditionally from that territory. All others would acknowledge the territory.
- The host is the person who would typically acknowledge the territory.
- The acknowledgment or welcome is usually the first item on the agenda.

For larger events, it is suggested to have a member of the local First Nation to welcome people to the territory. This could be an Elder or respected member of the Nation. In some cases, this requires an honorarium to be given to the person, to show appreciation for their knowledge and respect within the community.

WHEN SHOULD YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORY?

- Ambassador events
- Course syllabi
- Email signature (including official emails to all students)
- First day of classes
- Graduations/convocation
- Job postings
- Newsletters
- Orientation
- Staff meetings and professional development sessions
- UOIT website
- Workshops
It is important to note that the acknowledgement statement was created in consultation with the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation.

The statement should be fluid and natural when delivered.

Acknowledgement Statement:

UOIT is proud to acknowledge the lands and people of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, which is covered under the Williams Treaties. We are situated on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas, a branch of the greater Anishinaabeg Nation, which includes Algonquin, Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawatomi.

In order to ensure this acknowledgement does not become a checklist item, we need to commit to action, education, meaningful dialogue and change. Along with the acknowledgement, we must engage our communities in education about Indigenous history, treaties and the rich culture and traditions of Indigenous peoples. Remembering always, “nothing about us without us”.

Additional Resources:

Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation website:
scugogfirstnation.com/Public/Home.aspx

UOIT Indigenous Education and Cultural Services:
uoit.ca/indigenous

With permission, this file has been adapted from the Proud to Be: Acknowledge Traditional Territory document created by the Durham District School Board.