



Northlands College Procedures Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor Protocols and Guidelines

An Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor's perspective and presence can foster inclusion and promote understanding to support our shared journey of reconciliation. Inviting an Elder to participate in your meetings or events is an opportunity to share First Nations, Métis and Inuit knowledge, cultural beliefs and traditional practices with our education community.

Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor Protocols and Guidelines

The term Elder refers to someone recognized by their community as having attained a high degree of Understanding of First Nations, Métis or Inuit history, spirituality, traditional language, cultural teachings, ceremonies or healing practices. This is someone who is recognized in Cree, *mitho-pimatisowin* - living a good life. Elders have worked and studied over a period of time with other Elders to earn the right to pass on this specialized knowledge and give advice on personal and community issues. Elders are highly honoured and respected role models and mentors for all people. They embody First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture through their words, actions and being.

Gender and age are not factors, nor are they criteria in determining who is recognized as an Elder. Some Elders may be female. Other Elders may be comparatively young in age but very well versed in ceremonial and cultural practices. Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors are individuals recognized and identified by Elders of the community as being knowledgeable about cultural practices or worldviews. Rather than being called Elders, these people may be referred to as Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors.

Generally, it is the First Nations, Métis and Inuit community that recognizes and identifies the person as having acquired and earned the gifts of an Elder. Be cautious of those who describe themselves as Elders without confirmation from the community. As well, it is always best to find an Elder who is from the treaty area or Métis region where you are hosting the event. For these reasons, it is advisable to ask the community to identify an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor who has the spiritual or traditional knowledge and gifts appropriate for your request.

First Nations Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors often accept offerings of tobacco, one of the four sacred plants. However, depending on the area, sweet grass, sage or cedar, as well as broadcloth, may be the preferred offering. Some Métis Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors accept tobacco, while others prefer a different gift, such as tea.

Elder and/or Knowledge Keepers Duties

Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors are important members of our Indigenous communities and have valuable knowledge to share with Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the classroom.

Some of this knowledge includes, but is not limited to:

- Sharing cultural perspectives, as well as wisdom and teachings
- Promoting awareness of culture and traditions



Northlands College Procedures Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor Protocols and Guidelines

- Enhancing and enriching classroom lessons and school events with the integration of Indigenous worldviews
- Provide grounding and support for learners, faculty and staff
- Provide mentoring to learners, faculty and staff
- Support special events
- Supervise or support culturally-orientated courses and workshops
- Meet with learners, faculty, staff and visitors
- Offer classroom experiences to share knowledge
- Provide guidance in traditional cleansing and ceremonial activities
- Provide guidance on our reconciliation efforts

Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisors Safety

As Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors are often supporting departments, classrooms or events, they will rarely be alone in their duties. As such, assistance will usually be nearby if an emergency health or safety situation arises. However, the following is recommended:

- That accessibility be a primary concern in all locations that Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors will be present.
- That someone be made available to assist the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor in their duties as necessary or requested.

Inviting Elders, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor on Campus Protocols

When an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor is invited to your program/campus, we ask that you let all staff in your building know. We want to ensure that staff are aware of the visit to ensure the visit is as seamless and safe as possible.

If the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor is not a part of our college community, protocol suggests that:

- When contacting an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisory, a phone call is better than something in writing. Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors often rely more on the spoken word than written invites or emails.
- Do not contact an Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors months in advance and then leave it at that. Contact them again a few weeks in advance and then again a few days in advance.
- Keep the communication going until the event is complete. Make it really clear the start and end time and the amount of time the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor has to



Northlands College Procedures Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor Protocols and Guidelines

speak. Be sure to get the first and last name of the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor, the spelling of their name, how they would like to be addressed and their preferred contact information.

- Be prepared the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor may have to cancel due to community events or health issues. Ask for their advice on inviting another Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor.
- When Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Cultural Advisors are invited, the person or department responsible shall host the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor and their Helper(s), if any.
- The Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor host may be responsible for transportation, and should definitely greet the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor and Helper(s), and following the protocols outlined, as well as arranging for the gift of appreciation after the presentation, meeting or event.
- Greeting an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor have an Administrator, teacher, or student at the front door of the building to greet the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Knowledge Advisor and their travelling companion, if there is one.
- Do not assume that they will shake your hand. As you are introducing yourself wait to see if they offer their hand. If they do, do not squeeze their hands - do not apply any pressure greater than what they provide; expect it to be a soft hand that you shake and you will be fine.
- Be sure the person who will be introducing and thanking the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor knows about hand shaking considerations. Let the rest of your staff know an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor will be in the building. At larger events consider having a quiet room where the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor can prepare for the smudge or blessing, rest after travelling or before returning to their home. It would be polite to have a snack and a drink available upon their arrival or if it is midday or in the evening, plan to have a meal available.
- Be sure to find out in advance if the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor has allergies or any specific dietary requirements if they are invited to stay for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Ask how and when the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor would like to be served. If the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor has mobility challenges and cannot carry a plate of food or they use a walking stick, offer to serve them.
- Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors may bring their own Helper(s) who assists the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor in preparation of a ceremony. If the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor has their own Helper, it is important that they are fairly compensated (Gifts of Appreciation).



Northlands College Procedures Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor Protocols and Guidelines

If you need help connecting with an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives will maintain a list of Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors and their specialties.

Protocol during Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor led Prayer/Ceremony

During an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor-led prayer/ceremony, everyone should stand (if able), hats be removed, heads should be bowed, and hands should be by your side or clasped in front. Do not sit down until you are sure the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor has finished speaking. Do not talk text or take phone calls during the prayer/ceremony. Be in the moment and ask the group or audience to also be in the moment. Be gentle and understanding of those with challenges.

If Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors are present at a presentation, meeting or event, it is a sign of respect to acknowledge their presence. Although you may be on a first name basis with an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor, you should use caution, as people may not know that you are on a first name basis and may be offended with your use of their first name. At a formal event or meeting be formal and use both the first and last name. Name is stated ahead of title. If possible, confirm with the Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor on how they would like to be introduced.

Payment

Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors asked to provide support or services at special events, ceremonies or guest speakers in classes will be compensated with an honorarium. Faculties, campuses or departments seeking the services of community Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors will assume the cost of honoraria and expenses.

Time	Honorarium Value
Up to one hour	\$100
Between one and two hours	\$200
Each additional hour beyond the initial two hours	\$50
Max payment for a full day (up to a maximum of 6 hours contact with staff or students)	\$500.00
Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Cultural Advisors that have to travel to a Northlands College campus to perform their services will be paid travel expense such as mileage and per diems based on Northlands College rates. Any hotel accommodations will be completed by Northlands College.	

Once the appropriate paperwork is submitted from Indigenous Initiatives Office to Finance after services are delivered, payment will be processed in the next payment run – these are completed



Northlands College Procedures Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor Protocols and Guidelines

every Thursday. The payment can be made by cheque or EFT (if banking information is supplied by the vendor). Cheques can be mailed directly to the vendor or given to the requestor to deliver. This payment must be organized in advance of the visit. **The Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisory Request Form** attached allows you to get permission and have payment issued. If appropriate mileage and per diems need to be included in the payment, please contact the Indigenous Initiatives Office so an appropriate expense claim can be completed. Please send this documentation to indigenous.initiatives@northlandscollge.sk.ca.

The *Northlands College Elder Advisory Committee* will review the Elders, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor Protocol and Guidelines in on an ongoing basis.

Procedure Originated: May 14, 2021	Approved by: Board of Directors
Last Approved: September 17, 2022	Signature:



Northlands College Procedures Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor Protocols and Guidelines

Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor Request Form Date:

Elder :		Event Date:	
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Event Information

Name:			
Start time:		End time:	
Event location:			
Description/Purpose of Event:			
Estimated audience #		<input type="checkbox"/> Students	<input type="checkbox"/> Public

Information for Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Cultural Advisor

Requested arrival time:		Expected duration:	
Meeting location (specific):			
Contact who will meet Elder			
Email:		Phone:	
What does Elder need?			
Who provides parking & what is the procedure?			
Notes (ex. lunch provided after)			

Requestor Contact

Name:			
Department & Organization:			
Email:		Phone:	

Honorarium

Payment Method:	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque <input type="checkbox"/> EFT
Travel Payment:	<input type="checkbox"/> Y / <input type="checkbox"/> N *If yes, please contact the Indigenous Initiatives Office for appropriate expense claim.