



**congress 2023**

OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
Reckonings & Re-Imaginings

**congrès 2023**

DES SCIENCES HUMAINES  
Confronter le passé, réimaginer l'avenir

# Indigenous protocols for Congress 2023

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# **Indigenous protocols for Congress 2023**

York University and the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences are committed to creating an inclusive and respectful environment for the 2023 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. The purpose of this document is to provide guiding principles for association organizers as you strive to respect and honour the protocols of host Indigenous communities in and around Tkaronto and the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt area.

These guidelines outline observances to be followed by community members who wish to respectfully engage Indigenous knowledges. However, we encourage individuals to connect with us ([CongressInfo@yorku.ca](mailto:CongressInfo@yorku.ca)) and/or Knowledge Keepers for more in-depth knowledge on any of these topics.

## **Welcome for Congress 2023**

During the opening reception on May 26, 2023, York University senior leadership and the Congress 2023 Academic Convenor will acknowledge the Peoples and traditional lands on which we are occupying.

The territorial acknowledgement is intended to show recognition of and respect for Indigenous peoples, both past, present, and future. This opening reception is intended to provide an official welcome for all Congress activities, including individual association conferences. Should your association wish to include a territorial acknowledgement in your own programming, please consider the land acknowledgement identified below.

### **Official territorial acknowledgement**

We recognize that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.





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## Pronunciation guide

Anishnabek: (ah-nish-naw-bek)

Haudenosaunee: (hoodt-en-oh-show-nee)

Métis: (may-tee)

Tkaronto: (tig-a-ron-toe)

## When should you do a Land Acknowledgement

A Land Acknowledgement should be done by the host or organizer of an event. It should be done at the opening of the event within the first few minutes. It is okay to introduce yourself and welcome people, but the Land Acknowledgement should be done as the first agenda item.

We expect that host, coordinator or organizers will provide their own reflections of the Land Acknowledgement and offer “food for thought” for participants in their session.

A Land Acknowledgement needs to be meaningful and respectful. Many people have started to critique the performative nature of Land Acknowledgements; however, they are important and are the work of Indigenous colleagues. It is not a non-Indigenous person’s choice to opt out of a Land Acknowledgement. Instead of opting out, completely opt in! When giving the Land Acknowledgement make it relevant to the meeting/event and if you can personalize it, all the better.

## Toronto vs Tkaronto?

The City of Toronto takes its name from the Kanienkeha word Tkaronto, meaning “The place that the trees stand in the water” which was a fishing technique by the Haudenosaunee and Huron-Wendat peoples. The fishers would stand long poles into the narrows of waterways to create fishing weirs.

## Understanding some of the teachings on the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt

In many Land Acknowledgements for Tkaronto (including York’s) you will notice reference to the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt. This belt is a relational wampum between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee confederacies that talks about sharing and caring for the Great Lakes watershed. There are many teachings about the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt but here are a few: The Dish is both the geographical region and a ceremonial bowl of feast food. The food usually discussed in the Dish is stewed Beaver Tail. The Dish teaches us that everything we need is within the Dish and it is our responsibility to take only what we need from the Dish; make sure we leave enough in the Dish for everyone; and not to steal or foul the Dish.





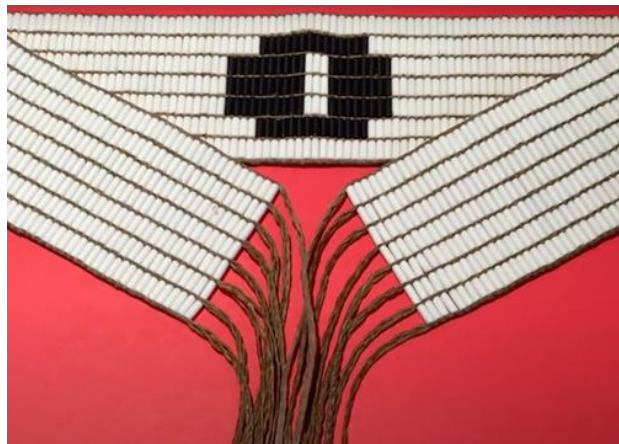


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The Spoon is to represent Peace. In Haudenosaunee tradition it is customary to serve feast food in small pieces so that there is no need to have knives (or other weapons) in community spaces. The Dish holds stewed Beaver Tail (a delicacy for both Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples), a meat that would need to be slow-cooked due to its muscle density. The Beaver Tail is cooked until it can be pulled apart without the use of a sharp tool. So, in this territory it is important to never take more than your share, ensure there is enough for everyone, not foul the territory and maintain peaceful relations.



### Smudging and other ceremony

Smudging is a First Nations and Métis ceremony held when an officiate believes it is appropriate to cleanse an area and/or participants involved in an activity. The officiate of the ceremony circulates a bowl or shell normally with sage, sweet-grass, tobacco, or cedar. These medicines are burned in small quantities and participants voluntarily use the smoke from the medicines to cleanse themselves.

York University respects the right of First Nations and Métis people to smudge and has developed guidelines to provide direction for the practice of smudging during university events. In the interest of the whole of the community the university requests advance notice when smudging is planned at a campus event. Smudging is not the only ceremony we acknowledge. There may be many others including water ceremony, pipe ceremony, lighting the Qulliq and scholars' Nation-specific ceremonies. If you would like to hold ceremony, please contact [CongressInfo@yorku.ca](mailto:CongressInfo@yorku.ca) by April 30, 2023 as safety precautions may need to be considered.

### Engaging traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders and Helpers

Relationships are imperative to respectfully engaging with Indigenous Leaders, Knowledge Keepers, Elders and Helpers. Not all Indigenous communities follow the same protocols; however, it is important that those engaged are done so with respect. If you are unsure of the Nation's protocol, ask the speaker if there are any protocols that they need to feel welcomed and respected.

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Some guidelines (the do's and don'ts) of asking someone to attend your association:

## Do:

Build a relationship with the speaker.



Have a specific request that can be communicated in a way that is not filled with discipline jargon unless the individual is a known speaker to that content.

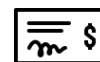


Ensure there is appropriate time for the speaker to plan and prepare.  
Ask with as much advance notice as possible.



Offer gifts:

- **Traditional tobacco** is a customary gift for some of the Nations in this territory. This gift can be in the form of a Tobacco Tie, traditionally grown tobacco, or commercial pouch tobacco. Offering cigarettes is not usually seen as respectful.
- **Customary gifts** may be offered to Elders, Knowledge Keepers and speakers that align with their Nation's protocols. It is your responsibility to ensure appropriate gifting.
- **Financial gifts** should be provided to the speaker at the completion of the event or ceremony. An honorarium can be either cash or cheque. A minimum honorarium of \$250 plus travel expenses has been standard for a typical York University event. When offering honoraria consider the length of the event and the request being made.
- **Other gifts** can be offered such as association specific 'swag' as well as a thank you card



If there is travel required, provide the speaker with multiple ways of arriving at the event (subway directions, closest parking lot or best spot to be dropped off by a driver). If possible, provide parking passes.





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Ensure there is someone to meet the speaker at their entry point to campus (outside the subway station, in the assigned parking lot, etc.) to ensure the speaker has an easy entrance to campus. If the speaker needs, have someone who can help carry their bundle or teaching tools.



If the speaker has a helper/Oshkaabewis please ensure this person is addressed as directed.



### Don't:

Ask a speaker to come in and speak on something that is not connected to their knowledge. Not all speakers are able to speak to all topics. Just like academics in the humanities and social sciences, there are many knowledgeable individuals but not everyone carries the same knowledges.



Ask the speaker to be the only Indigenous content in your association's planning or program.



Ask an Indigenous person (either within your association or as a guest) to read or 'perform' the Land Acknowledgement. The host or the event organizer needs to do this work.



## Resources on campus

- [The Indigenous Framework for York University: A Guide to Action](#)
- [The Indigenous Framework for York University: A Guide to Action 2017-19 Update](#)
- [The Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Languages](#)
- [Centre for Indigenous Student Services](#)





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## Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge that these protocols have been based on the work of other Indigenous communities that have guided Congress in other locations. We are grateful for all of the work that Indigenous Peoples in different institutions have done to guide and support the work of Congress.

We have developed these guidelines specifically for York University, Tkaronto and the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt area with the support and guidance of local Knowledge Keepers, Elders and leaders.

*NB: This is a living document intended as a general guideline. This document may be periodically reviewed and updated with relevant changes.*

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