

Cultural Protocol Policy

Policy Category: Human Resources

Approved By: Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Vice-President (Administration and Finance)

Effective Date: August 6, 2004 [Revised 9 May 2013]

Purpose

Lakehead University (Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses) respects and supports the Aboriginal tradition of smudging that includes the use of four sacred medicines (sage, cedar, tobacco and sweetgrass).

Lakehead University recognizes and supports Aboriginal traditions practised on campus by Aboriginal students, faculty and staff in classrooms, student gathering places, offices, cultural events and meetings in various locations throughout the University.

Authority and Responsibility

The authority for this policy flows from the “Smoking on Premises” policy where an exception has been noted in item: Procedures (8): “to accommodate the use of tobacco or related substances in connection with culturally significant celebrations formally conducted on campus by members of the Aboriginal community.”

The Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and the Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives), in consultation with Human Resources are responsible for implementing this Smudging Protocol Policy.

Policy

Lakehead University permits the on-campus use of the four sacred medicines in connection with Indigenous spiritual practices at cultural and educational events, meetings and relevant classroom presentations.

Procedures

1. The four sacred medicines include sage, cedar, tobacco and sweetgrass. Other medicines associated with Aboriginal cultural practices from various Indigenous cultures may be considered but must receive prior approval of the Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives).
2. Lakehead University supports the use of the four sacred medicines for Aboriginal cultural events and activities taking place on campus including (but not limited to): one-on-one counselling sessions, opening/closing prayers, smudging, feasts, sacred circle gatherings, pipe ceremonies, pow wows, drumming and singing.
3. At least five (5) working days prior to smudging, a notice shall be issued in the “Communications Bulletin” and Security Services shall be notified. Giving notice recognizes the importance of smudging as a cultural practice and recognizes that some members of the community are sensitive and/or allergic to smoke. Individuals are

encouraged to alert their supervisors so alternate arrangements can be made for vulnerable persons in the vicinity of smudging. This does not preclude individual units going beyond the policy to do more to ensure the additional notification of vulnerable members. Responsibility for the safe and appropriate use of the sacred medicines rests with the lead participant(s) of the event.

4. In urgent situations (death, tragic event or other), where five (5) working days notice cannot be provided, smudging shall take place in the Elders' Room in SC 0004a located in the Aboriginal Student Lounge in the Regional Centre, or BB 2003 in the Braun Building (Thunder Bay campus). For Orillia, special arrangements will be made through Student Affairs Orillia and/or the Aboriginal Liaison Advisor, Orillia.
5. Any person of the University community can request that the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives provide one-on-one or group sessions to learn about the cultural practice of smudging at any time and the request will be followed up within fourteen (14) days.
6. The Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives) may designate outdoor smudging areas more than 50 metres away from any building at any time and without prior notification.
7. Smudging is not permitted in buildings designated as residences.

Compliance: Five (5) working days' notice will be provided to Media Relations and Security Services to inform the University community of events that will include the use of sacred medicines.

Contact and Review: Endorsement from the Ogimaawin Aboriginal Governance Council and the Ogimaawin Elders' Council will be sought prior to approval of this policy. Questions or concerns regarding the implementation of this policy should be referred to the Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives), the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Vice-President (Administration and Finance) who will review this policy every three (3) years and recommend changes as required.