

# Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples & Traditional Territory



"INFINITY" © CHRISTI BELCOURT

The following document offers the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) recommended territorial acknowledgement for institutions where our members work, organized by province. While most of these campuses are included, the list will gradually become more complete as we learn more about specific traditional territories. When requested, we have also included acknowledgements for other post-secondary institutions as well.

We wish to emphasize that ***this is a guide, not a script***. We are recommending the acknowledgements that have been developed by local university-based Indigenous councils or advisory groups, where possible. In other places, where there are multiple territorial acknowledgements that exist for one area or the acknowledgements are contested, the multiple acknowledgements are provided.

This is an evolving, working guide.

# How to use this guide

The goal of this guide is to encourage all academic staff association representatives and members to acknowledge the First Peoples on whose traditional territories we live and work. This acknowledgement appropriately takes place at the commencement of courses, meetings or conferences, and presentations (given either at one's home institution or elsewhere).

Acknowledging territory shows recognition of and respect for Aboriginal Peoples. It is recognition of their presence both in the past and the present. Recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations. These relationships are key to reconciliation, a process to which CAUT is committed.

While acknowledging territory is very welcome, it is only a small part of cultivating strong relationships with the First Peoples of Canada. Acknowledging territory and First Peoples should take place within the larger context of genuine and ongoing work to forge real understanding, and to challenge the legacies of colonialism. Territorial acknowledgements should not simply be a *pro forma* statement made before getting on with the "real business" of the meeting; they must be understood as a vital *part* of the business.<sup>[1]</sup>

CAUT strongly encourages academic staff associations to reach out to local Indigenous communities to open pathways for dialogue, specifically to discuss the wording of the acknowledgement. This is important to ensure that it is both respectful and representative, as acknowledgments sometimes change, or specific communities are given prominence depending on the context or the audience in attendance. Also, given that there is no single standard orthography for traditional Indigenous names, this can be an opportunity to ensure correct pronunciation of Indigenous community or nation names.

The recognition of Métis presence and nationhood is also essential. While the Métis are acknowledged in some of the territorial acknowledgements listed below, this

aspect of the Guide needs to be developed. We therefore ask that, in consultation with local Métis associations, you include acknowledgement of Métis People where appropriate.

1. For more about what meaningfully acknowledging First Peoples entails, please take a look at the following article: [http://www.megaphonemagazine.com/unceded\\_territory](http://www.megaphonemagazine.com/unceded_territory)

### **Our Process**

This document has been reviewed by CAUT's Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Working Group and much effort has been made to ensure that it is accurate. We would also like to thank the many members of CAUT's listserv for Aboriginal Academic Staff who have provided generous and valuable feedback in the development of this guide.

Many of the acknowledgements have been developed solely through consulting written documents, such as treaty maps and texts. Community consultation remains essential. We would very much appreciate suggested edits. Please contact CAUT with any suggested changes or additions.

## Acknowledgement statements

- + **Newfoundland and Labrador**
- + **Prince Edward Island**
- + **Nova Scotia**
- + **New Brunswick**
- + **Quebec**
- + **Ontario**

- + **Manitoba**
- + **Saskatchewan**
- + **Alberta**
- + **British Columbia**