



Centre for Indigenous Learning and Support

# Land Acknowledgement Guide

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## Sheridan's Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that the land on which we gather has been and still is the traditional territory of several Indigenous nations, including the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat, the Métis, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Since time immemorial, numerous Indigenous nations and Indigenous peoples have lived and passed through this territory.

We recognize this territory is covered by the Dish with One Spoon treaty and the Two Row Wampum treaty which emphasizes the importance of joint stewardship, peace, and respectful relationships.

Sheridan College affirms it is our collective responsibility to honour and respect those who have gone before us, those who are here, and those who have yet to come. We are grateful for the opportunity to be working and living on this land.

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In addition to the aforementioned treaties, Sheridan is located in the territory of Treaty 13A and Treaty 19. The Trafalgar Campus and Mississauga Campus falls under [Treaty 13A, 1805 - Toronto Purchase](#), and the Davis Campus in Brampton is under [Treaty 19, 1818 - Ajetance Treaty](#).

For more on land acknowledgements from an Indigenous perspective, please see [this video interview](#) with Stephen Paquette.

# Indigenous Nations in the Land Acknowledgement

## **Anishinaabe Nation ([territory map](#))**

The Anishinaabe Nation includes the Odawa, Saulteaux, Ojibwe (including the Mississaugas), Potawatomi, Oji-Cree and Algonquin peoples.

[Anishinabek Nation](#)

[Map of Anishinabek Territory](#)

## **[Mississaugas of the Credit \(First Nation\)](#)**

The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation are Ojibway and a part of the Anishinaabe Nation.

[MCFN Map](#)

[History of the MCFN](#)

## **[Haudenosaunee Confederacy](#)**

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy is comprised of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca.

[Map of Haudenosaunee Territory](#)

## **[Six Nations](#)**

Six Nations is a part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and is also known as “Six Nations Reserve No. 40.”

## **[Métis Nation](#)**

The Métis Nation is comprised of the descendants of French, English, Icelandic, and Scottish, and European men who intermarried with Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dene women. Over time, the Métis people developed a distinct way of life, their own languages, a unique governance structure based on the buffalo hunt, and a shared history that was solidified through various historical events. Métis people were connected through extensive trade networks, seasonal hunting grounds, and extensive water ways. While the traditional homeland of the Métis stems from the Red River Settlement, the Métis people have moved frequently along

the water ways. To this day the Métis are still displaced from their homelands continue to affirm their right to a homeland.

### Métis Nation of Ontario

## Question and Answers

### What is a land acknowledgement?

Sheridan's Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that publicly recognizes Indigenous peoples and their unique relationship to the territory upon which Sheridan is located. It serves as a reminder of treaties and our responsibilities to uphold them, care for the land, and maintain peaceful relationships with one another.

### What is the significance of land acknowledgements?

Acknowledging the land is an essential part of Indigenous cultures as it reminds us of the gifts that come from the land and our responsibilities to the land.

Land acknowledgements are an important first step towards recognizing our responsibility to honour and respect the land and the First Peoples who have been the caretakers of this land. It raises awareness of the presence of Indigenous Nations and the nation-to-nation relationship that exists through treaty relationships. It invites reflection as we consider what it means to be grateful and respectful in our relationship with Indigenous peoples and the land. Land acknowledgments serve as a reminder of our present-day obligations to respect and honour Indigenous peoples.

Our ability to work and/or live in the lands around Sheridan stems from past and current policies of assimilation and expulsion of Indigenous peoples that non-Indigenous people continue to benefit from. Because we have benefited from the legacy of colonialism and the ongoing colonial policies that impact Indigenous peoples, we have an obligation to work towards reconciliation. A land acknowledgement followed with action serves as a transformative catalyst to create a renewed, respectful, and equitable relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

### When should a land acknowledgement be given?

Land acknowledgements can be done at any time. They are often provided at the start of a day or at the beginning of an event or gathering. They may be placed on official documents or publications. Regardless of when and where a land acknowledgement is provided, it is important to consider your intentions and reasoning behind providing a land acknowledgement to ensure that it is reflected in the work that you do.

If you will be providing a land acknowledgement off-campus or at another location, it is important to identify whose traditional territory that you are on and what treaties, if any, are applicable to that area.

### Who should give a land acknowledgement?

Anyone can give a land acknowledgement and it is the responsibility of everyone to acknowledge the land. Faculty, administration, staff, students, facilitators, and community members may wish to provide the land acknowledgement.

***It is especially important for non-Indigenous people to take up the responsibility and ensure they understand the wording, meaning, and significance of the land acknowledgement.***

If you are asking an Indigenous person to do the land acknowledgement, consider the reasoning behind the request and be sure that representation of Indigenous people is reflected throughout the event or gathering. An Indigenous person's participation in an event or gathering should be meaningful to both the person and the others present.

### Are land acknowledgements always scripted? How do I make my own land acknowledgement?

While Sheridan has crafted a formal public statement as an institution, we encourage you to customize it by including an introduction of who you are and your positionality. It is a good idea to offer time for reflection during the land acknowledgement and invite people to consider what actions they may wish to take to support the words of the statement. Demonstrate the significance of the land acknowledgment to your specific event or meeting and to the actions your group or organization is taking.

### Should a land acknowledgement be given in an online environment?

The online work environment is an extension of Sheridan. If your event, meeting or gathering would typically start with a land acknowledgement then please continue to do so in the online environment. Because members of the Sheridan community may be accessing the online space from other territories, it may be beneficial to acknowledge this and allow a moment of pause for reflection and consideration.

## What are some important considerations when doing a land acknowledgement?

Acknowledgement of the land is not a checklist item and it should not be rushed. Critiques of land acknowledgements have drawn attention to the often-performative nature of reciting land acknowledgements.

Ask yourself some important questions:

- Do I know how to pronounce the terms or names that I will be saying?
- Do I understand the significance of what I am reciting?
- Do I know the meaning behind what I am saying?
- How does my event, meeting, or gathering reflect what I am saying?
- What actions will follow the land acknowledgement?
- How might I move from acknowledgement to relationship?
- Has the recitation of the land acknowledgement become performative, stale, or is it still fulfilling its intended purpose?
- What is my responsibility and commitment to the land?
- What is my responsibility and commitment to my team, my workplace and the larger Sheridan community?

The goal is not to create a script for yourself. Instead, spend time reflecting on these questions and who you are, and what your role is on this territory. Remember that these commitments are both personal and professional responsibilities.

## What are next steps after acknowledging the land?

The land acknowledgement is a first step towards reconciliation. It must be followed with action. Effort should be made to educate ourselves about Indigenous worldviews, cultures, histories, and current lived realities. Visit Sheridan's [Indigenous Studies Library Guide](#) as a start.

Familiarize yourself with Sheridan's [Centre for Indigenous Learning and Support Plan](#) and the [Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes](#) of which Sheridan is a signatory.

Make a personal and professional commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

## What is a treaty? Do they still exist?

Treaties are legally binding agreements between nations. First Nations have a long history of making treaties with other First Nations to promote the peace and good relations. When European settlers arrived in this continent, the treaty making process was continued with the introduction of the Two Row Wampum.

Subsequently, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 affirmed the nation-to-nation relationship between the Crown and First Nations people. The British Crown assumed the responsibility of treaty making so that the territory that would later become Canada could be settled. Despite the Royal Proclamation's outlining of a treaty making process, not every territory and First Nation entered into treaties.

Section 35 of the Constitution Act recognizes and affirms Aboriginal rights. Rights that pre-date both the constitution and the confederation of Canada.

### **Section 35 of the Constitution Act states:**

35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

(2) In this Act, "aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

(3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) "treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

## What is the Dish with One Spoon Wampum?

(picture link <https://www.indiantime.net/photos/big/7510/12>)

The Dish with One Spoon is a peace treaty agreement that was made between the Haudenosaunee and allied nations, and the Anishinabek confederacy and allied nations after decades of strife. The territory of this treaty is vast and extends around the Great Lakes region and includes territory that would later become a part of Canada and the United States.

The Dish with One Spoon is a reminder of the importance of joint stewardship and care for one another and our planet. The dish represents nature or Mother Earth. Just as we only have one Mother Earth, we only have one dish. All beings have an equal right to



the gifts from Mother Earth, as the land is meant for all. Therefore, we should only take what we need, remember to leave some for others, and keep the dish clean. The spoon represents the importance of peace and coming together without sharp edges and without hurting one another.

(picture link [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Dish-with-One-Spoon-belt-replica-Made-by-Ken-Maracle\\_fig6\\_332901083](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Dish-with-One-Spoon-belt-replica-Made-by-Ken-Maracle_fig6_332901083) ).

### What is the Two Row Wampum Agreement?

The Two Row Wampum is the first peaceful agreement made between European Nations and Indigenous Nations. It was first created between the Mohawk people and the Dutch. It may be considered as an invitation for non-Indigenous people to share the land. It is a guarantee that non-Indigenous people would be entitled to their own language, laws and customs and so too would the Indigenous peoples. Translator Huron Miller, in The Record of the Two Row Wampum speaks about the significance of the agreement:

*We will not be like father and son, but like brothers. These two rows will symbolize vessels, traveling down the same river together. One will be for the Original People, their laws their customs, and the other for the European people and their laws and customs. We will each travel the river together, but each in our own boat. And neither of us will try to steer the other's vessel.*

The white rows or stripes represent peace, friendship, and mutual respect which are the key ingredients a healthy relationship.

Despite the formation of the Two Row Wampum, the Dutch and later the English struggled to maintain their end of the agreement. A series of treaty councils took place in which a Dutch man suggested the symbol of a three-link iron chain (representing friendship, a good mind, and peace) be used to connect a ship (representing the non-Indigenous people) to a canoe (representing the Indigenous peoples). Over time though, iron would rust and would not be a suitable connection of the ship and the canoe. Instead, it was suggested a rope would work. Again, with time a rope would fray, and the relationship would be lost. Finally, it was suggested to use silver. Unlike iron and rope, silver -with proper polishing and care - could stand the test of time. This understanding of the importance of caring for the relationship became known as the Silver Covenant Chain, the Covenant Chain, or The Friendship Belt.

Image for the Friendship Belt <http://vitacollections.ca/sixnationsarchive/2687120/data>

Haudenosaunee oral tradition speaks of the time from of this treaty:

*As long as the Sun shines upon this Earth, that is how long OUR Agreement will stand; Second, as long as the Water still flows; and Third, as long as the Grass Grows Green at a certain time of the year. Now we have Symbolized this Agreement and it shall be binding forever as long as Mother Earth is still in motion.*

The Two Row Wampum and the Silver Covenant Chain symbolizes a commitment to peace and the importance of good relationships. Like silver must be dusted and polished, the relationship must be regularly renewed as it is an everlasting relationship that was solidified through the treaty making process.

## Additional Resources

- [Centre for Indigenous Learning and Support](#)
- [Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes](#)
- [Indigenous Studies Library Guide](#)
- [Indigenous Students Library Guide](#)
- [Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)
- [Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)
- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

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