

Indigenous Peoples remain underrepresented in Canadian postsecondary institutions due to historical and ongoing colonial barriers and institutional discrimination. Western, like many postsecondary institutions in Canada, is moving beyond the sole reliance upon Indigenous self-identification when hiring for roles that are designated for or where where preference is given to applicants with Indigenous citizenship/membership. This is to safeguard against use of incorrect, incomplete or misleading claims of Indigenous citizenship or membership.

Understanding the Purpose of the Relational Accountability Process	
This guide explains the steps to follow if you are making a declaration of Indigenous citizenship or membership. Policy 1.58 ensures that individuals who identify as Indigenous and seek opportunities at Western designated for or preference is given to applicants with Indigenous Citizenship or Membership (e.g., hiring, awards) affirm their citizenship or membership in a respectful and consistent way. - It applies to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples in Canada and Indigenous Peoples globally.	
When to Complete an Affirmation of Indigenous Identity	
Applicants who self-declare Indigenous Citizenship or Membership may need to complete the affirmation process. Internal applicants, and external applicants who are selected for an interview, will be directed to complete the affirmation process when one of the following is true: - The selection is limited, or when preference is being given, to applicants with Indigenous citizenship or membership. - A candidate is making a declaration of Indigenous citizenship or membership, which results in a material advantage and/or intangible benefits at Western. Note: All job postings will declare if there is a requirement to complete the affirmation process.	
What You Need to Prepare	
Upon direction of the University, internal applicants, and external applicants who are selected for an interview, who are making a declaration of Indigenous citizenship or membership that is subject to the Policy will be required to provide the Indigenous Affirmation Advisory Committee with the following for review and affirmation: 1) A statement of relational positionality that includes details of: - The individual’s personal lived experience in relation to their declaration of Indigenous citizenship or membership; - The individual’s personal connections, responsibilities, and interrelationships with their Indigenous Nation, Clan, language, culture, community, land, and other relevant responsibilities, including details of the individual’s lineal descent; and; - Where relevant, details about how colonial practices have impacted how the individual is able to claim Indigenous citizenship or membership as a person with lived experience. 2) You’ll also need two documents demonstrating proof of citizenship or membership in the Indigenous Nation who claims the individual, such as: Documentation from your Indigenous Nation or community confirming your citizenship or membership. A letter or statement from a recognized Indigenous organization that affirms your connection. Other forms of documentation that demonstrate your relationship to the community (e.g., status card, citizenship card, community registry). A non-exhaustive list of documents that can be provided can be found on Procedure for Policy 1.58 (pages 4-6). Note: The documentation must be from the Nation or community claiming you, not just self-identification. More details can be found here: Procedure for Policy 1.58 (page 4).	
How to Submit Your Affirmation	Affirmation Review Process
<i>Know where and how to send your documents.</i> - Submit your documentation directly to the secure affirmation portal. - Hiring Managers or Human Resources professionals will not be involved in the affirmation process. Please reach out to Indigenous Initiatives with any questions you may have regarding the Affirmation process. - Where membership is required, or preference is being given, to applicants with Indigenous Citizenship or Membership based on the accountabilities of the role, internal applicants and those selected for an interview, will be asked to complete the affirmation process.	<i>Understand the review process.</i> - Your documentation will be reviewed confidentially by the Indigenous Affirmation Advisory Committee at Western, which includes representatives from the local Indigenous communities, Indigenous faculty members and Indigenous staff at Western. - If clarification is needed, you may be contacted to provide additional information. More details can be found here: Procedure for Policy 1.58 (pages 6-7). Please allow up to three weeks for communication from the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (via indigenous.affirmation@uwo.ca). - Once affirmed, you will be notified that your affirmation supports access to Indigenous-specific opportunities, and you will be permitted to proceed within the relevant process or will be given preference, as applicable. More details can be found Procedure for Policy 1.58 (pages 7-8).
Support & Resources	
<i>Get help if needed.</i> - Specific inquiries related to the affirmation process should be directed to indigenous.affirmation@uwo.ca. Western’s Office of Indigenous Initiatives: For broader support and community connections please contact indigenousteam@uwo.ca.	

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: AFFIRMING INDIGENOUS CITIZENSHIP OR MEMBERSHIP

Staff Roles at Western University



1) *How will my information be used and stored?*

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) secures all documents in a private portal. Only select personnel from the OII will be able to access the documentation and personal information from the portal. The information is used strictly for affirmation purposes by the Indigenous Affirmation Advisory Committee (IAAC). No other unit or individual will have access to the portal.

2) *What if I am unable to provide the required documentation?*

When an applicant is unable to produce the required identity documentation due to colonial displacement (e.g. enfranchisement, 'Sixties Scoop'), and who are currently reconnecting to their Indigenous communities, consideration by the IAAC will be provided through the individual's statement of '**Relational Positionality**', which requires the following:

- 1) An affidavit signed and sworn by the individual confirming:
 - i. Proof of lineage connection to said community/ family/ persons (e.g., personal narrative with relevant references, dates, details, etc.); and
 - ii. A historical and genealogical account of one's claimed membership to an Indigenous community.
- 2) A minimum of two (2) community reference letters bearing witness to or affirming the individual's membership in the community who claims them:
 - i. One (1) of the references must be by a member of the community who has demonstrable personal history with the individual; and
 - ii. One (1) of the references will be solicited by the University.

3) *What if Indigenous citizenship or membership is not successfully affirmed?*

The IAAC chair will advise the individual of the IAAC's determination and provide information about the appeal process. An individual whose declaration of Indigenous citizenship or membership was not affirmed will have five (5) business days to provide written notice of appeal to the Vice Provost/Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Initiatives.

A Chair and Appeal Board will be formed within ten (10) business days consisting of individuals who were not members of the IAAC that made the determination under appeal to review all documentation and hear directly from the individual requesting the appeal.

More details can be found [Procedure for Policy 1.58](#) (pages 8-9).

Note: IAAC members will attempt to reach all affirmation decisions by consensus. If consensus is not reached, an Indigenous Elder/ Knowledge Keeper, identified by Western University's Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII), will be engaged to lead a discussion circle to help the group to reach a consensus.

4) *How do I update or change my affirmation?*

- If your citizenship or membership status changes, you can update your documentation by contacting the Office of Indigenous Initiatives at indigenous.affirmation@uwo.ca.
- You can also withdraw your application at any time.

5) *Are there any consequences to giving false or misleading information on Indigenous Identity?*

An individual who the IAAC and/or University believes may have made an intentionally false declaration of Indigenous citizenship or membership may be subject to investigation by the University. The individual will be advised of any interim measures implemented by the University pending completion of the investigation and will be provided with an opportunity to know and respond to the concern(s) raised before any findings are made by the investigator. If the concern is well founded, the University will take appropriate corrective action, which may include:

- Termination or revocation of the individual's role, opportunity, or other relevant Indigenous-designated/ preferred initiative;
- Disciplinary action (in accordance with University policies, collective agreements and/or employment policies as applicable);
- Future ineligibility for any role at Western; and/ or
- Other appropriate action under applicable University policy/collective agreements.