

STUDENT GUIDE

Affirming Declarations of Indigenous Citizenship or Membership at Western University
(MAPP 1.58)



For Prospective Students & Current Western Students

Purpose of this guide: Explain when affirmation is required, what to submit, how your information is reviewed, and who to contact. This guide complements [MAPP 1.58](#) and its Procedure and does not replace them. If this content is triggering, support resources are available in the [Procedure](#) on page 12.

What is affirmation and when does it apply?

Affirmation is an Indigenous-led process that verifies a declaration of Indigenous citizenship or membership when doing so will result in a material advantage (e.g., designated admission seats, scholarships, bursaries, awards, or other opportunities reserved for Indigenous students, or where Indigenous students are given preference).

Who leads student affirmation? The Indigenous Student Centre applies the student affirmation criteria and process, with support from the Indigenous Affirmation Advisory Committee (IAAC) when needed. Decisions can be appealed to the IAAC.

Typical timeline: About three weeks once all required materials are received (timing may vary if more information is needed).

Key idea: [MAPP 1.58](#) applies only if a material advantage is being sought because of Indigenous citizenship or membership.

Two student pathways (know which applies to you)

A. Prospective Students to Western (Admission Processes)

- **Affirmation is required if you apply to Indigenous-designated admission pathways** or programs offering preference to Indigenous applicants. Expect to self-identify on your application and **ensure you complete the affirmation process for consideration** in Indigenous admission pathways (including, but not limited to, Indigenous Admissions Access Category, Indigenous Student STEM Access Pathway, Indigenous-designated seats, etc.)
- If you are not using a designated/preference stream and are applying through the general admission pathway, affirmation is not required.

B. Current Western Students (Awards, bursaries, scholarships & other opportunities)

- Affirmation is **required for Indigenous-designated awards, bursaries, scholarships, grants, or funded opportunities** (or those giving preference to Indigenous students).
- If your citizenship/membership was previously affirmed by the Indigenous Student Centre (e.g., for admissions or a past award), you don't need to re-affirm as the Indigenous Student Centre maintains a secure list.
- Classroom participation: Sharing your perspective, as an Indigenous student, in class does not require affirmation. Note: **rules differ for GTAs who hold positions of authority** over students.

What to prepare (students)

A. Relational Positionality Statement (up to 4 pages)

- Your lived experiences related to your Indigenous citizenship/membership.
- Your connections and responsibilities with your Nation, Clan, language, culture, community, and land, including lineal descent, think of it as a short biography of your relations.
- If relevant, how colonial practices (e.g., residential schools, Sixties Scoop, enfranchisement) have affected your ability to claim citizenship/membership.

B. Two (2) documents demonstrating proof of your citizenship/ membership with an Indigenous Nation/ Community who claims you (non-exhaustive)

- A citizenship/membership letter and/or card from your Nation/community or its recognized membership authority.

- Letters of reference from Indigenous relatives or community-recognized leaders (e.g., Clan Mothers, Lodge Keepers) who know your lived relationship to community.
- A citizenship/membership card (yours and/or biological parent/grandparent) with proof of lineal connection (e.g., long-form birth certificate).
- Recognized Métis membership proof (Métis Nation of Ontario; Manitoba Métis Federation; Métis Nation–Saskatchewan; Métis Nation of Alberta; Métis Nation British Columbia; Northwest Territory Métis Nation).
- Inuit beneficiary documentation.
- Certified genealogy demonstrating lineage.
- Other documents recognized in the Procedure.

If you cannot access standard documents due to displacement (e.g., Sixties Scoop), you may submit a sworn affidavit with a historical/genealogical account plus two community reference letters (one from a community member with personal history with you; one solicited by the University).

How to submit & how your information is handled

- For undergraduate applicants: If you self-identify as Indigenous on your application, a To Do List item will appear in your Student Center. This item includes the secure portal link where you must upload your Positionality Statement and two verification documents to demonstrate that an Indigenous Nation / Community claims you.
- For graduate applicants: Students will be contacted directly by the Indigenous Student Centre or their respective School/Faculty with instructions on how and where to submit the required affirmation materials.
- Documentation is not accepted by email and should not be submitted to faculty, departments, or award committees. Through confidential information submitted via the **Indigenous student portal**, only pre-designated Office of Indigenous Initiatives staff (and IAAC, if engaged) will see your materials; units are told eligibility only (eligible/not eligible).
- Allow about three weeks after all materials are received; you may be asked for clarifications. You will be notified of the outcome by the Office of Indigenous Initiatives.

Appeals

Should your submission get referred to the Indigenous Affirmation Advisory Committee for review, and this committee does not affirm your declaration, you may appeal. The appeal is an oral hearing, and you will receive a written decision. The appeal decision is final. It should be noted that if your circumstance should change over time, which is not uncommon, students are encouraged to reapply and have any new information considered.

Contacts & Resources

Questions about student affirmation? Email the Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) / Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII): indigenous.affirmation@uwo.ca

[MAPP 1.58](#) (Policy) and Procedure are available on Western's website.

Quick checklists

Prospective Students to Western (Admission)

- If applying to an Indigenous-designated/preference admission stream (e.g., the Indigenous Admissions Access Category), plan to affirm for consideration.
- **Draft your Relational Positionality Statement; gather two verification documents that demonstrate how an Indigenous organization/ Nation claims you.**
- Indigenous citizenship/membership documentation must be submitted through the designated secure submission portal process (undergraduate applicants via their Student Center To Do List; graduate applicants as directed by ISC or their School/Faculty).
- Build ~3 weeks into your planning.

Current Western Students (Awards/Funding/Opportunities)

- Affirmation applies if applying for a new or renewed Indigenous-designated award/bursary/scholarship/opportunity (or one giving preference to Indigenous students)
- If already affirmed previously by ISC, you do not need to re-affirm.
- If not yet affirmed, **prepare your Positionality Statement and two verification documents that demonstrate how an Indigenous organization/ Nation claims you;** submit as directed by ISC.
- Allow ~3 weeks for review before deadlines.

What goes in the Relational Positionality Statement?

- Details of lived experiences related to your Indigenous citizenship/membership.
- Connections & responsibilities with Indigenous Nation/Clan/language/culture/community/land, including lineal descent.
- (If relevant) How colonial practices have affected your ability to claim Indigenous citizenship/membership.

Accepted Proof Examples (non-exhaustive) (Must provide two (2))

- Citizenship/membership letter or card from your Nation/community.
- Letters from Indigenous relatives or community-recognized leaders.
- Citizenship/membership card (yours and/or biological parent/grandparent) + proof of lineal connection to them.
- Recognized Métis membership ([MNO](#), [MME](#), [MN-SK](#), [MN-AB](#), [MNBC](#), [NWTMN](#)).
- Inuit beneficiary documentation
- Certified genealogy
- Other documents in the [Procedure](#).

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