EOAS Field Research Guidelines for Indigenous Engagement

*"EOAS has extensive **field-based** research and educational programs which are conducted on Indigenous lands in British Columbia and around the world, and it is therefore incumbent upon us to develop approaches to Earth-science teaching, learning, and research that fully respect Indigenous Peoples, rights and title, and lands."*
- EOAS Indigenous Strategic Plan

This living document is a starting point for respectful engagement with Indigenous peoples in **EOAS land- and water-based research**. It is intended to serve as a resource for graduate students, researchers, and faculty members who are beginning new research projects, or seeking to engage Indigenous communities in ongoing research. **You may not be able to answer every question in this document right away**—instead, use this document to collect your findings and identify gaps in your knowledge and practice. This document is the product of initiatives described in the EOAS and UBC Indigenous Strategic Plans.

Context

The Department of Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences at UBC is located on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. The land we are situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

As part of our commitment to redress historic harms, the following guidelines are intended to support future research in EOAS in prioritizing consent, collaboration, and reciprocity between UBC and Indigenous communities.

Development context

This project aims to consolidate guidelines and resources for EOAS researchers for Indigenous Engagement for field-based research. The guidelines started as a student-led initiative with input from the EOAS Indigenous Engagement committee and Pacific Museum of Earth at EOAS. In the process of drafting this document, different groups were contacted for input. Those consulted include (1) other UBC departments (e.g., Forestry, Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability), (2) other earth science departments in British Columbia (e.g., at Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, University of Northern British Columbia, Vancouver Island University, and Thompson Rivers University), (3) the UBC Office of Research Ethics, (4) the UBC Indigenous Research Support Initiative, and (5) Ocean Networks Canada. This document is meant for continuous improvement, review, and updates from within and outside the EOAS community.

Before you begin

1. **Where are you planning to undertake fieldwork?**

2. **Will this fieldwork take place on Indigenous lands and waters?**

Indigenous lands include lands covered under Aboriginal title, including reserves, Métis settlements, and other Indigenous lands covered by self-government agreements, Inuit or First Nations land claim agreements, as well as traditional lands that are not formally recognized by the state. If you are unsure whether your fieldwork will be taking place on Indigenous lands and waters, please refer to Resources 1 and 3 at the end of this document, or contact the EOAS Indigenous Engagement Committee for assistance.

    ☐ **Yes, this fieldwork will take place on Indigenous lands and waters.**

    ☐ **No, this fieldwork will not take place on Indigenous lands and waters.**

If your fieldwork does not take place on Indigenous lands and waters, you may still wish to use this document to guide your engagement with local community members and research institutions.

3. **Which Indigenous communities have relationships with these lands and waters?**
Keep in mind that more than one Indigenous communities may have relationships in the same area. If you are unsure whose territory you will be working on, resources are available at the bottom of this document to help begin your search.

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4. **Does the area or research materials (i.e. samples) have cultural, spiritual or archaeological significance?**
You can consult with the communities and/or collaborate with other departments. Reflect on whether the research can expand on and include components of this. Keep in mind that all research involving humans, if conducted under the auspices of UBC, requires a research ethics review, even if it is not funded by one of the tri-agencies; please refer to resource 16.

<u>Building relationships</u>

5. **Are you aware of community priorities, existing agreements with UBC, and current protocol for research work with the communities you intend to work with?** Keep in mind that protocols are community-specific—an approach that suits one community may not meet the needs of another. Please refer to resource 9 at the end of this document for further information on protocol.

6. **Who will you engage within these communities?** Consider your existing relationships with community members, governing bodies, collaborators, and cultural advisors. Whose consent is required for research to proceed? This could be a chief, an elder, or an individual from the community. Where do you need to build relationships? How will you connect with new collaborators?

7. **Please include the name and contact information of one or more partners from each Indigenous community you will engage:**

   Name:
   Phone/email:
   Affiliation:

8. **How will your research benefit the communities you are working alongside?** Research on Indigenous lands and waters must be part of a reciprocal relationship. Keep in mind that "benefits to the community" are defined by the community themselves, not by outside researchers. Please refer to Resource 11 at the end of this document for examples of reciprocity and how it can be enacted.

9. **How does your work respect Indigenous or other ways of knowing?** Traditional knowledge enriches our fieldwork in many ways, but care must be taken to observe community rules, governance, and protocols around the sharing of Indigenous knowledge. A cultural representative can be an excellent resource during your fieldwork—remember that funding must be set aside to recognize their contributions (see Resource 8).

10. **How will your activities on the land and waters enrich these communities beyond your research?** You might consider supporting Indigenous businesses and suppliers during your fieldwork, offering your expertise as a volunteer consultant, or participating in community events.

11. **What is your plan for ongoing engagement and follow up with the communities you are working alongside?** It is vital to maintain a relationship and follow up with the Indigenous communities you are working alongside after your fieldwork has finished. Additionally, sharing research findings and its implications (if there are any) with the community is crucial (see point 7 below). Maintaining these relationships ensures research is collaborative and reciprocal rather than extractive.

Guidelines for engagement

The following steps are general recommendations for working with Indigenous communities. Protocol will differ between communities and may call for additional steps or longer timelines than laid out here.

1. **Make an engagement and adaptation plan** for your project as early as possible, or 6-12 months before your anticipated fieldwork. Consider what challenges might arise during engagement—what alternatives will you pursue if a community does not have capacity to field your requests, or does not consent to research? The Indigenous Research Support Initiative at UBC is available to review engagement plans.

2. **Research** relevant issues in your fieldwork area, including socioeconomic conditions, histories of resource exploitation, and impacts of past research, as well as the potential implications of your research on local Indigenous communities and ecosystems. Gather information on respectful engagement practices and specific protocols. Reflect on your own background and relationship with the lands and waters you intend to work upon.

3. **Prepare your engagement materials.** This can include background information, discussion points, and maps. You can have a short letter ready introducing yourself and your research and/or a few slides for video/in-person meetings.

4. **Compile contact information and learn more about the communities.** Consult appropriate resources on pronunciation and practice pronunciation of place names, people, and communities involved in your project.

5. **Contact communities** as early as possible. Reciprocal relationships must develop "at the speed of trust," meaning they cannot be rushed to meet institutional deadlines. This step should take place **at minimum** 3-4 months before fieldwork, but earlier is better. During this step, you should engage and offer partnerships, co-develop work together, discuss data governance and research protocol agreements, listen for input, and adapt your project in response to constraints and criticisms. Offer translations, gestures of appreciation, and payments for cultural representatives when necessary (refer to resource 8 for more information on gestures of appreciation). Keep detailed records of your discussions during this process and maintain transparency around how and why, which includes asking community members if this is fine with them. If possible, have a conversation around it, e.g. if they want to see what the records say, do they want to add to them, or do they want these shared/used in the same way the researchers intend to share/use them?

6. **Ongoing consent and fieldwork.** Research can begin once you have received free, prior, and informed consent from all Indigenous communities involved. This includes not only how your research will proceed but also how your findings, especially if informed by Indigenous expertise, will be shared. Consent must be ongoing and reflect any updates to your research plan or proposed activities. Carry copies of all research permits during your fieldwork. See Resource 12 for further information on free, prior, and informed consent and Resource 9 for introductory information on data sovereignty.

7. **Follow up.** Make a knowledge transfer plan with all community partners. Discuss what forms of data and outputs communities would like to receive—in addition to academic papers and datasets, consider offering options that are accessible to a wide range of community members, such as photos, audio recordings, and short, plain-language summaries.

Resources

1. **BC Assembly of First Nations map:** Interactive map of First Nations in BC. https://www.bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/interactive-map

2. **First Peoples' map of B.C.:** https://maps.fpcc.ca/languages

3. **Native-Land.ca:** A starting point for researching Indigenous territory. Territory boundaries should be confirmed with individual communities. https://native-land.ca/

4. **Indigenous Research Support Initiative:** UBC initiative offering resources and support for planning Indigenous engagement in research. https://irsi.ubc.ca/researchers. See also: IRSI Principles for Engagement online guide.

5. **CIRNAC Indigenous Peoples and Lands map**: Legal maps of land claims, treaties, etc. May not reflect traditional and ancestral territory. https://www.cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1605796533652/1605796625692

6. **ATRIS Canada:** Searchable database of Indigenous communities, treaty rights, and land claims. https://sidait-atris.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/SIDAIT-GEO-ATRIS/index-eng.html

7. **Pronunciation for Indigenous Communities and organizations in BC:** https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/a_guide_to_pronunciation_of_bc_first_nations_-_oct_29_2018.pdf

8. **IRSI Indigenous Finance Guidelines:** Information on financial compensation and gift-giving protocols for elders, knowledge holders, and cultural advisors. https://irsi.ubc.ca/news/ubc-launches-indigenous-finance-guidelines

9. **Local Contexts Traditional Knowledge Labels:** Not all traditional knowledge can be shared freely—this resource from Local Contexts contains a series of attribution and use labels to aid Indigenous knowledge keepers in communicating how traditional knowledge can be used and shared in research. They also provide useful explanations of why some knowledge cannot be shared universally. https://localcontexts.org/labels/traditional-knowledge-labels/ / https://localcontexts.org/labels/biocultural-labels/

Additional Resources

10. **X̱wi7x̱wa Research Guides:** UBC's X̱wi7x̱wa library's list of guides that can assist you in finding further resources and answering questions. https://guides.library.ubc.ca/xwi7xwaresearchguide / https://xwi7xwa.library.ubc.ca/

11. **Working in Good Ways:** University of Manitoba resource kit for Indigenous community engagement.
    Framework and resource guide: https://umanitoba.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/framework-guide.pdf
    b. Practitioner workbook: https://umanitoba.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/practitioner-workbook.pdf
    c. Relational assessment guide: https://umanitoba.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/relational-assessment-guide.pdf

d. Pathways for engagement: https://umanitoba.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/a-pathway-for-indigenous-community-engagement-infographic.pdf

12. **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent:** From the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which both B.C. and Canada have endorsed. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/FreePriorandInformedConsent.pdf

13. **Research papers on engagement in natural sciences:**

a. Wong et al. (2020) - Towards Reconciliation: 10 Calls to Action to natural scientists working in Canada

b. Reid et al. (2024) - Ecological research 'in a good way' means ethical and equitable relationships with Indigenous Peoples and Lands

c. Adame (2021) - Meaningful collaborations can end 'helicopter research'

d. Wilson et al. (2016) - Meaningful community engagement in the extractive industries: Stakeholder perspectives and research priorities

e. Liboiron (2021) - Decolonizing geoscience requires more than equity and inclusion

14. **NRCan Map Browser:** Natural Resources Canada land survey search. https://clss.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/mb-nc/en/index.html?_gl=11pcau53_gaNTE1NjQwNTU0LjE2Nzg4OTk3Mzc._ga_C2N57Y7DX5*MTY4MDU1NjI5My4yLjAuMTY4MDU1NjI5My4wLjAuMA

15. **Special locations websites, contacts, and licensing:**
a. **BC First Nations:** https://www.bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/interactive-map
b. **Northwest Territories:** https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/research-licensing
c. **Yukon:** https://yukon.ca/en/science-and-natural-resources/research-and-monitoring/apply-scientists-and-explorers-act-licence
d. **Nunavut:** https://www.nri.nu.ca/research-licencing-nunavut

16. **UBC ethics review information:**

a. Definition of research involving humans on the UBC Office of Research Ethics webpage
b. Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2022)
c. Chapter 9: Research involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada