

MORE THAN WORDS



At Western, our Land Acknowledgement strives to rise above mere words and instead seeks to inspire action and commitment towards recognizing and furthering our relationships with Indigenous communities.

Across the country, territorial or land acknowledgments have become a common practice. They are often spoken at the beginning of a public gathering, like Convocation, or written in various publications, websites, social media and course syllabi – all in an effort to pay respect to the Original Peoples of the territory upon which we physically sit.

Despite its presence, however, the Western Land Acknowledgement is not always fully understood by the university. Why are these words necessary? What words do we use? When and how do we use them? When spoken, how can they be most respectfully and properly presented?

To further that understanding, we have prepared this brief guide in hopes of allowing the university community to shed any uncertainty toward offering its clear voice to these important words.



Western

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The Western Land Acknowledgement has been in practice for many years. It was first officially read at Convocation in Spring 2016. Since the approval of the Indigenous Strategic Plan in October 2016, the Land Acknowledgement has been used widely across the university.

Why do we do land acknowledgements?

The Land Acknowledgement pays respect to the Original Peoples of the territory upon which the university is physically located, as well as recognizes the ongoing presence of Indigenous Peoples in educational settings. It is one way we declare the university's commitment to building on its relationships with and responsibilities to Indigenous communities.

When do we use it?

While there is no official policy governing the Land Acknowledgement's use, Western considers it an important statement of the institution's identity and, as such, endorses its reading before any meeting or event held on campus, or printing within a publication or on a website.

Do I need to follow it word-by-word?

Approaches to the Land Acknowledgement can differ based on peoples' differing positionalities. For example, non-Indigenous members of the community may acknowledge Indigenous Peoples presence and connections to lands, whereas Indigenous Peoples from the local territory may welcome peoples to the land. It is not a script; It is a guide. You are encouraged to bring your personal story or meaning to the words in the environment they are delivered in.

What else can I do?

There are a number ways to make the Land Acknowledgement part of your professional and personal skillset, including learning how to pronounce local Indigenous Nations names in their original languages; locating yourself in relation to Indigenous land and identity; learning about local Indigenous communities; speaking from the heart about what relationships with and responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action* mean to you.

THE LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Western Land Acknowledgement comes in three versions, each appropriate to use in a written or spoken setting. A pronunciation guide is provided in each version for speakers and should be removed when used in a written format. This is not a script; this is guidance. You are encouraged to bring your personal story or meaning to the words in the environment they are delivered in.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – VERSION 1

We/I acknowledge the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ah-pay-wuk) and Attawandaron (Add-a-won-da-run) peoples, whose traditional lands we are gathered upon today.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – VERSION 2

We/I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ah-pay-wuk) and Attawandaron (Add-a-won-da-run) peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples (e.g. First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT – VERSION 3

We/I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ah-pay-wuk) and Attawandaron (Add-a-won-da-run) peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.

With this, we/I respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (e.g. First Nations, Métis and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research and community service.