

SUBJECT
VOLUNTARY SELF-IDENTIFICATION FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS
BACKGROUND

In 2011, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), now known as the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD), published a policy framework in support of Indigenous Education. The key goals of this framework are as follows:

Accountability and Transparency: Transparency and accountability are enhanced by improved reporting on and access to information about post-secondary education and training.

Responsiveness and Respect: Post-secondary education and training environments are increasingly responsive to and respectful of the needs, choices, and aspirations of Indigenous learners.

Indigenous Learners' Success: An increasing number of Indigenous learners have the skills and formal education required to more actively participate in the changing labour market.

Labour Market Readiness: An increasing number of Indigenous learners have the skills and formal education required to more actively participate in the changing labour market.

Northern College supports the goals and objectives of the MAESD Indigenous Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework (2011) and, recognizing the importance of education in improving the lifelong opportunities for Indigenous people, strives to support the success of Indigenous students. Northern College is committed to:

- involving Indigenous students in continuing to build a proud and respectful community of Indigenous learners;
- reaching out to Indigenous students at the college and encouraging active participation as a member of the college community;
- providing the services and supports to ensure a successful experience at college;
- developing strategies to encourage Indigenous students to participate in postsecondary education and training.

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POLICY

Northern College encourages all students who consider themselves to be related to, or descended from the Original peoples of Canada to voluntarily declare their Indigenous ancestry. Northern College collects this information in accordance with the regulations outlined in the *Ontario Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and in support of the goals and objectives articulated in the Indigenous Post-Secondary Education Policy Framework issued by the Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

DEFINITIONS

This policy is relevant to all students who consider themselves to be of Indigenous ancestry. Northern College uses the term Indigenous to include First Nations, Metis, or Inuit, and to include any individual who has ancestry to, or is descended from, the Original peoples of Canada.

SCOPE

The policy is applicable to all students who believe they meet the definitions outlined above and who are participating in any process involving *voluntary* self-identification, where proof of identity is not required. This policy may not be applicable in those situations where it is mandatory for students to self-identify and/or where documentation and proof of identity is required (e.g. funding and scholarships).

AUTHORITY

The Director of Student Services, Institutional Research and Registrar or designate is responsible for the interpretation of the Voluntary Self Identification for Indigenous Students policy and to ensure the process and procedures are properly administered.

PROCEDURES
1. Data Collection and Storage

While a student is in attendance at Northern College, the following documents (electronic or paper format) comprise his/her record:

- application form and its documentation, and admissions correspondence (e.g. testing results);
- cumulative record of grades;
- record of changes of status (e.g. grade changes, registration status);

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- record of withdrawal;
 - any in-course documentation from the college or third party sources which concern student's status (e.g. letters from sponsor agency, record of disciplinary actions, etc.);
 - record of performance honours;
 - record of financial assessment and/or payment and/or Tuition Fee Agreement.
- The computer record carries the codes of full account of the current status created by the documentation identified above.

Two years after a student leaves the college, the pertinent paper documentation in a student's files will be destroyed.

2. Access

Basic guidelines governing the release of information are based on the belief that the Registrar acts with discretion upon authorization from the student. In response to third party inquiries, therefore, what is public record may only be released, namely:

- dates of student's enrolment;
- program in which he/she was enrolled;
- date, when certificate/diploma was awarded.

No further information will be released without student authorization. This applies typically to requests from prospective employers, police forces, credit bureaus, finance and loan companies, private investigation agencies, banks and similar organizations.

Members of a police force or sworn peace officers may, in the course of a criminal investigation, complete a Release of Information – Legal Authorities form, thereby giving officers access to the student's record.

Requests for mass listings of directory information will be denied. Where such listings have in-house legitimacy, such as the facilitation of student elections, they may be released with discretion. The contents of a student file will not leave the Office of the Registrar; nor will they be duplicated for that purpose. The exception will be made in the case where a court subpoena or a search warrant is in effect.

Documents from other institutions such as high school or university transcripts which are submitted to support a student's application for admission and/or transfer credit may not be certified and released as part of the college record. If however, the college, by not doing so, may cause excessive hardship to the student, it may, at the discretion of the Registrar, and with notification to the student, forward such a transcript with an appropriate disclaimer attached, and marked to the receiver, "For your exclusive use only".

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a. Access by the Student

Each student may, upon written request, access his/her own file, request its release to a third party, or request it be held with no release allowed. At the same time, the college may hold back the release of a record of a student who has debts outstanding to the college.

Note: An authorization and consent form for the release of records is available in the Office of the Registrar or from Student Services.

b. Access by College Personnel

Faculty, Advisors and Administrative Officers of the college who have a legitimate requirement for the material of the record will be permitted access to the appropriate files. If there is any question, the request will be referred to the Registrar. Typically, this "legitimate requirement" includes verification of program requirements, selection committees for student awards, and so on.

c. Access by Third Parties Outside the College
(i) Parents

Since the basis of all transactions with students assumes adult levels of responsibility, transcripts will not be released to parents or guardians without the student's consent.

(ii) Sponsoring Agencies

A transcript will be released on request to those approved sponsoring agencies, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Service Canada, WSIB, CIDA, AANDC, etc., who provide financial support to the student in college and who supply authorization from the student to do so.

(iii) Government Agencies

Properly identified representatives of federal, provincial or local government agencies, including municipal police, OPP, and RCMP, will be treated as any third party; that is, student authorization must accompany their request for information. If, in the opinion of the Registrar, however, denial of the information could involve hardship to the student, appropriate details may be released. Typically, this would involve notification of a family death, search for next of kin, and so on.

(iv) The Courts

In the event that a student record is subpoenaed by the court on behalf of the student, a certified copy of the full student record will be offered. Should the record be subpoenaed

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by the party other than that representing the student, a certified copy of the record will be offered to the judge alone, with an explanation of the college's reluctance to release a private document without student authorization. The decision will then rest with the judge.

(v) **Researchers**

Requests from researchers making statistical studies must be approved by the President or his/her delegate under conditions that protect the student's privacy and guarantee the anonymity of the data collected.

3. Notice of Disclosure

Northern College is required to report student-level enrolment-related data to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development under the authority of the *Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002*. The Ministry collects this data, which includes limited personal information such as Ontario Education Numbers, student characteristics and educational outcomes, in order to administer government post-secondary funding, policies and programs, including planning, evaluation and monitoring activities.

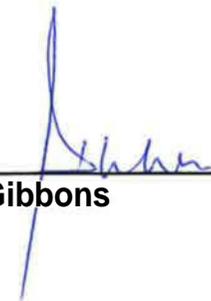
4. Confidentiality

Data on self-identification will be protected by College policy governing the use of student information, in particular Academic Policy A-18, Student Academic Records. It also has legal protection through the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O., 1990*.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix I Indigenous Student Self-Identification – Frequently Asked Questions
- Appendix II Northern College Indigenous Student Self-Identification Form

APPROVAL BY PRESIDENT:



 Fred Gibbons



 Date

Approved by the Indigenous Council 2014-06-23

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APPENDIX I

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can self-identify as an Indigenous person?

Any individual can self-identify as an Indigenous person if they believe they are related to, or descended from, the Original peoples of Canada.

Northern College uses the term Indigenous in reference to both the legal definition provided in Section 35(2) of the Canadian Constitution, which defines Indigenous peoples as Indian (First Nation), Metis, or Inuit and in the spirit of this definition, to include any individual who has ancestry to, or is descended from, the Original peoples of Canada.

Any student, who believes that he or she meets either the legal definition, or the spirit and intent of the definition, is encouraged to self-identify.

Northern College acknowledges that students may prefer to identify using different terms that more accurately reflect their own definition or perception of identity.

How does self-identifying benefit me?

When you self-identify as an Indigenous person, it benefits others by helping to build a sense of community and pride among Indigenous learners at Northern College.

If the college knows you are of Indigenous identity or ancestry, relevant information may be sent directly to you. This may include information about specific Indigenous bursaries or other financial assistance, notice of cultural events, referrals to support services, access to cultural and lounge space for Indigenous students, and invitations to participate in a variety of relevant activities.

Why is Northern College asking me to self-identify?

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and Northern College recognize the importance of education in improving the lifelong opportunities for Indigenous people. Northern College is committed to:

- Developing strategies to encourage Indigenous students to participate in postsecondary education and training;

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- reaching out to Indigenous students at the college and encouraging active participation in cultural events or activities;
- involving Indigenous students in continuing to build a proud and respectful community of Indigenous learners, and
- providing the services and supports to assist Indigenous students to successfully graduate.

In order to appropriately plan for and deliver programs, services, supports and opportunities that are relevant to Indigenous students, Northern College would like to know how many Indigenous students are applying to, and/or enrolled at, the college. The information you provide also helps us to effectively measure the success of our efforts.

Who will have access to my information about self-identification?

All data will be stored securely to respect privacy and used only as a means to enhance education programs and services.

All student information collected is legally protected under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Information about your Indigenous identity or ancestry is stored in the secure student information system.

This information will not be routinely displayed to faculty.

What does the college do with the information collected about self-identification?

The college uses the information in a variety of ways:

- to direct the college in providing culturally relevant programming and services;
- to help fulfill the personal and academic goals of each student;
- to expand and improve current programs and services;
- to develop new strategies to meet the needs of Indigenous students.

At an aggregate level, Northern College uses the information to officially report on progress against our goals related to Indigenous education to the Northern College Indigenous Council on Education (NCICE), the Board of Governors and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD).

Will I have to prove I am Indigenous?

The process is voluntary in nature and you are not required to prove your Indigenous identity.

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How do I self-identify?

Students have the ability to self-identify through the Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) application process.

In addition, Northern College Self-Identification forms are available:

- online through MyNorthern
- at all Student Services offices
- from any of the Indigenous Student Advisors

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SELF IDENTIFICATION FORM

Welcome to Northern College!

Northern College is committed to ensuring quality, accessible education through innovative programs, services and partnerships.

The information collected from this Self-identification Form will assist us in working to provide a learning environment that is responsive to our students' needs. Benefits of completing and submitting this form may include determining eligibility for student bursaries/awards, implementing new services, supporting existing student services, etc.

You are encouraged to complete and return the confidential self-identification form with your registration package or submit the completed form to the Student Services Office at your campus. If you require further information or clarification, please contact your nearest Student Services office.

Student Name _____ Student/OCAS# _____

Do you consider yourself to be an Indigenous person? Yes () No ()
Indigenous people are persons in Canada who identify themselves to be of First Nations descent (Status or Non-Status), Inuit, or Metis

Do you consider yourself to be a First Generation Learner? Yes () No ()
First Generation Learners are students whose parents/guardians have not attended post-secondary education. If a sibling of the student has attended a postsecondary institution but the parent(s)/guardians have not, the student is still considered a First Generation student.

Are you sponsored by:
 Employment Ontario's Second Career Strategy? Yes () No ()
 Band Office? Yes () No ()
 Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB)? Yes () No ()
 Other sponsor? Yes () No ()
(please identify) _____

***Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.
 Please return to the Student Services office at your campus.***

Please visit the Northern College website for more information about the following:
 Student Services: <http://www.Trytothem.ca/>
 Indigenous Services: <http://www.northerncollege.ca/indigenous/>
 Second Career Strategy: <http://www.northerncollege.ca/secpfd-carTer>

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Date received: _____	Campus: _____
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