

Smudging Procedure

Keeping Tobacco Sacred on a Smoke-Free Campus

On May 31, 2019, the University of Guelph (Guelph Campus) went smoke-free. However, section 5.1.1 of the [Tobacco and Smoke-Free Policy \(Guelph Campus\)](#) provides an exemption that covers smudging and the use of Traditional Medicines by First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

5.1.1 In keeping with the exceptions in the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, Smoking, burning or use of Traditional Medicines, including Tobacco Products, by an Indigenous person or persons accompanied by an Indigenous person for Indigenous spiritual or cultural purposes is permitted on Guelph Campus. Smoking and burning of Traditional Medicines is done in accordance with the University's Smudging Procedure.

Designated Smudging Space

Traditional medicines and smudging are available for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students, staff and faculty at the Indigenous Student Centre (Federal Building, 620 Gordon Street) from 9am - 4pm Monday to Friday.

Smudging Protocol

While smudging is an accepted practice on campus, there are several details which must be followed for fire safety and some buildings require modifications to the air handling and fire alarm systems.

The act of clearing the air, mind, spirit and emotions may be accomplished in a variety of ways but according to practice, a smudge is led by a person who has an understanding of what a smudge is, why it is done and the guidelines for the University of Guelph. That person may be an Indigenous Elder, Knowledge Holder or Community Helper; it can be an Indigenous student, staff, faculty member or guest.

The medicine will be placed in a fire-proof smudge container. The container may be a shell, stone, copper, brass or cast-iron bowl or pan. The medicine is lit with a match or lighter. Once the medicine is lit, the flame is extinguished and the smoke may be pushed forward with a feather or a fan. Only a small stream of smoke is required therefore, it is important for facilitators to appropriately manage the amount of medicine used indoor spaces. Smudging should not create enough smoke to overpower the space.

Following smudging any spent matches, remaining embers and ash should be contained in a fire-proof container until they are cold to the touch and can be disposed of. The facilitator should also be aware of any fire concerns including the type of fire detection equipment,

sprinklers, location of extinguishers, location of any combustible materials and emergency contact numbers.

Students living on campus are asked to not smudge in their residence room however they may request a suitable location through Student Housing Services or visit the Indigenous Student Centre as a designated space.

Facilities Considerations

Across campus, the fire detection and suppression systems vary from building to building. Those wishing to smudge in rooms other than designated areas are asked to:

1. Contact Cara Wehkamp, AVP (Indigenous Initiatives) to review the guidelines.
2. Contact Fire Prevention Services to explore the details of the event space including building and room number.
3. If it's established that the fire system needs to be modified for smudging to occur, place a work order with the Physical Resources Work Order Desk indicating the building, room number and the timeframe when the smudging will occur. The request should be copied to the Work Order Desk, Cara Wehkamp, and Fire Prevention Services.

Smudging requests should be submitted as far in advance as possible with at least three working days prior to the event.

When a system is modified, a person needs to be designated as Fire Watch. This person will call Campus Safety Office Dispatch at (519) 840-5000 when the system is turned off and call again once the smoke dissipates and the system is turned back on.

If an alarm sounds during smudging, leave the building immediately in an orderly fashion.

Contacts

- Cara Wehkamp, Assistant Vice-President (Indigenous Initiatives) | cwehkamp@uoguelph.ca | (519) 824-4120 Ext. 58687
- Fire Prevention Services | request@fire.uoguelph.ca | (519) 824-4120 Ext. 52071
- Physical Resources Work Order Desk | wo@pr.uoguelph.ca
- Campus Safety Office Dispatch, in case of emergency or for notification (519) 840-5000

We respect the diverse traditions and protocols for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and communities.