



World • Indigenous • Nations • Higher • Education • Consortium

WINHEC

Research Standards

FIRST EDITION

WINHEC RESEARCH AND JOURNAL WORKING GROUP

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PREAMBLE

Introduction

This document, presents a compilation of information relating to research undertaken within Indigenous-serving postsecondary institutions and programs and, in particular those individuals, groups and organisations which operate as members of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC).

World Indigenous Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) Founding Principles

This World Indigenous Higher Education Consortium was founded on the principles outlined in the following Articles of the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

Article #12,

Indigenous Peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of human remains.

Article #13,

Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

Article #14,

Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

Article #15,

Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information. States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.

In addition the Consortium supports the Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Rights in Education (1999) in the belief that Indigenous people have the right to be Indigenous.

WINHEC Vision:

“We gather as Indigenous Peoples of our respective nations recognizing and reaffirming the educational rights of all Indigenous Peoples. We share the vision of all Indigenous Peoples of the world united in the collective synergy of self determination through control of higher education.

We are committed to building partnerships that restore and retain Indigenous spirituality, cultures and languages, homelands, social systems, economic systems and self determination.”

WINHEC Mission:

“Provide a forum and support for Indigenous peoples to pursue common goals through higher education”.

WINHEC Goals:

The purpose of WINHEC is to provide an international forum and support for Indigenous Peoples to pursue common goals through higher education, including but not limited to:

1. Accelerating the articulation of Indigenous epistemologies (ways of knowing, education, philosophy, and research);
2. Protecting and enhancing Indigenous spiritual beliefs, culture and languages through higher education;
3. Advancing the social, economical, and political status of Indigenous Peoples that contribute to the well-being of Indigenous communities through higher education;
4. Creating an accreditation body for Indigenous education initiatives and systems that identify common criteria, practices and principles by which Indigenous Peoples live;
5. Recognizing the significance of Indigenous education;
6. Creating a global network for sharing knowledge through exchange forums and state of the art technology;
7. Recognizing the educational rights of Indigenous Peoples;
8. Protecting, preserving and advocating Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights, in particular the reaffirming and observance of the Mataatua Declaration on Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples (June, 1993); and
9. Promoting the maintenance, retention and advancement of traditional Indigenous bodies of knowledge.

Background

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) highlights Indigenous peoples have the right to free, prior and informed consent. Additionally, the UN Declaration, on the rights of Intellectual Property, states:

Article 31.1.

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

International mechanisms such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)¹ 1992, add to the above position. Notably, *The Tkarikwaié:ri² Code of Ethical Conduct to Ensure*

¹ see www.cbd.int.

Respect for the Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Indigenous and Local Communities”,³ which is a result of many years of work in the above frames of the UN, particularly The UN Convention on Biodiversity, newly adopted (October 2010), states:

Supporting research initiatives of indigenous and local communities

25. Indigenous and local communities should have the opportunity to actively participate in research that affects them or which makes use of their traditional knowledge related to the objectives of the Convention⁴, and decide on their own research initiatives and priorities, conduct their own research, including building their own research institutions and promoting the building of cooperation, capacity and competence.

In recognising Indigenous peoples’ inherent and prior rights to their lands and resources and respecting their legitimate authority to require that third parties enter into an equal and respectful relationship with them, based on the principle of informed consent, this document has set out to advocate fundamental requirements for research activity to ensure not only protection but local advantage.

Indigenous Knowledge is clearly not bound by time; it is continuing, dynamic and is simultaneously accessed through past, present and future. As Janke⁵ (1999) states:

Indigenous knowledge systems form part of a living heritage. Indigenous knowledge systems contain a wealth of information including traditional arts, crafts, dance and cultural expressions, belief systems, customary laws, environmental knowledge of plants and animals and kinship systems...under Indigenous laws, knowledge may be held by one person, a family or community, and the right to share or disseminate that knowledge is subject to a complex system of consents. There is also a cultural obligation to pass on knowledge, and to guard its cultural integrity.

The primacy and validity of Indigenous knowledge, as it is defined and articulated locally, is a fundamental requirement in all research activities. Important is the protection of sacred sites, secret and sacred knowledge and other artefacts. Such knowledge authority, cultural responsibility and the scholarship of Elders and Knowledgeable others is therefore central within the local knowledge position and all activities including research⁶.

WINHEC is committed to research activities which respect local knowledge, has relevance to the people, is reliable and works reciprocally drawing from, gathering and documenting

² Pronounced {Tga-ree-wa-yie-ree}, a Mohawk term meaning “the proper way”.

³ <http://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-42-en.pdf>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Janke Terri, *Our culture: our future – Report on Australian Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights*, Michael Frankel and Company, written and published under commission by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Sydney 1999.

⁶ Arbon, V 2008, *Arlathimda, Ngurkurnda Ityrnda, Being, Knowing and Doing; De-Colonising Indigenous Tertiary Education*, Post Pressed, Teneriffe

information and knowledge to generate solutions and recommendations locally, regionally, nationally and internationally with and by Indigenous peoples while honouring, affirming and advancing knowledge through deep and complex scholarship. Thus, the tensions of epistemology must be addressed, for these areas within and at the interface of knowledges, are central to the necessary translation, dialogue and negotiation to be undertaken to achieve not only informed consent but outcomes of Indigenous relevance. As Porsanger ⁷ (2010) argues:

Research protocols for each research project on indigenous issues must be negotiated with indigenous and local communities with regard to the following key issues: Respect, Reciprocity, Reliability, and Relevance

Researchers from within Indigenous societies or external to same must therefore hone their knowledge and skills in order to work respectfully and collaboratively with Indigenous knowledge and within the relationships of all. Elders and Knowledgeable others can also be the researcher, the advisors or the focus of research and they too are required to maintain deep obligations to their knowledge and the balance of all within the environment as they engage within the research.

To fulfil the requirements of Indigenous peoples and their knowledge communities, research undertaken by or with Indigenous people under the auspices of WINHEC will be guided by the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) Research Standards based on the above and articulated as follows.

WINHEC Research Standards

Indigenous Research

- (a) respects local Indigenous authority particularly that of Elders and respected knowledgeable others;
- (b) recognises knowledge as part of a living and constantly adapting system that is grounded in the past, but continues to grow through the present and into the future and reinforces this in research approach;
- (c) uses the local language respectfully as a foundation for interpretation and meaning;
- (d) understands relationships across knowledge derived from diverse knowledge systems;
- (e) acknowledges multi-ownership and levels of knowledge;
- (f) addresses community and individual responsibility/ownership of knowledge.

Individual Researchers

- (a) work with local Indigenous Elders and Respected knowledge holders;
- (b) ensure prior and informed consent;

⁷ Ibid

- (c) recognise their responsibilities and the ongoing influences of Western knowledge;
 - (d) build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve success;
 - (e) engage responsibly and effectively in research activities that are grown from,/based on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing;
 - (f) demonstrate appreciation of the relationships, connections and processes of interaction of all elements in and of the world;
 - (g) situate one's self and define ones purpose for undertaking research competently;
 - (h) develop a critical self awareness.
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**Research
Process and
Practice**

**(Enacting
Research)**

- (a) addresses requirements outlined in this document and locally;
 - (b) incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and practicing in its work linking what is being researched to everyday lives;
 - (c) works closely with individuals and communities to achieve a high level of complementary research outcomes and expectations;
 - (d) honours Indigenous Elders and respected knowledge holders scholarship and authority;
 - (e) recognises the potential of individuals and communities and provides the training as necessary for them to participate powerfully in research;
 - (f) accepts responsibility to protect sacred sites, secret and sacred knowledge and other artefacts.
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**Organisational
Practice**

**(Facilitating
Research)**

- (a) has high level of involvement of Indigenous staff and Elders and respected knowledge holders in lead organizations;
 - (b) fosters on-going participation, communication and interaction between researchers, programs and community researchers and personnel;
 - (c) recognizes and assures ownership of intellectual knowledge – ownership of data needs to sit with the Indigenous community;
 - (d) provides remuneration for time and other costs and, dispersal of publication profits to community;
 - (e) ensures sacred sites, secret and sacred knowledge and other artefacts are protected.
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**Community
Practice**

**(Linking
Research)**

- (a) recognises local Indigenous Elders and Respected knowledge holders;
- (b) honours the primacy and validity of Indigenous knowledge as it is defined and articulated locally;
- (c) takes an active authoritative role in research while nurturing family responsibility, sense of belonging and cultural identity;
- (d) assists new members in learning and utilizing knowledge and information generated through research;
- (e) contributes to all aspects of research design, implementation and

- outcomes for local advantage; and,
- (f) ensures sacred sites, secret and sacred knowledge and other artefacts are protected