

MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION LEADING PRACTICES OVERVIEW

Background

The [*Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan: A 2020 Vision for the Future*](#), launched in 2012, was developed by British Columbia's Aboriginal post-secondary partners and commits to improving outcomes for Aboriginal learners.

A key objective is that public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal-controlled institutes in British Columbia are implementing policies, programs and services based on leading practices, and that these leading practices are publically available.

The Framework contains commitments to gather and share leading practices on the following:

- Aboriginal Advisory Councils;
- Aboriginal Gathering Places;
- Aboriginal Student Housing;
- Partnerships;
- Transitions;
- Mentoring;
- Indigenous Knowledge; and,
- Assessment and Benchmarking.

For this purpose, leading practices have been defined as practices that lead to successful outcomes. These practices have been gathered from the collective wisdom, knowledge and experience of Aboriginal education practitioners, policy-makers and leaders within BC's Aboriginal post-secondary education system.

The Ministry has drafted an initial set of Leading Practices through a literature review, BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Coordinators Council (BCAPSC) meetings, a joint forum with the BCAPSC and the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) in 2015, and Aboriginal Service Plan coordinator meetings from 2011-2015.

The BCAPSC and Indigenous Leadership Roundtable (I-LEAD) senior Aboriginal administrators have reviewed the templates and provided substantive feedback that has been incorporated into the current drafts.

Next Steps

The Ministry would like the partners to review the revised templates. The documents attached consist of checklists of leading practices on each of the topics listed above.

The Ministry will update the templates with feedback as required and provide opportunity for iterative feedback and revision to refine and validate the leading practices based on implementation, testing and research over time.

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ABORIGINAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

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Based on your knowledge and experience, please provide feedback on the following practices regarding the design, development, and implementation of an effective Aboriginal Advisory Council.

	Leading Practices	Comments and suggested changes
1.	Develop and follow Terms of Reference generated in collaboration with Aboriginal communities	
2.	Work with local communities and ensure broad representation, including urban and Métis organizations, Aboriginal institutes, youth, learners and Elders	
3.	Ensure advisory council has a direct link to the president and/or board and that Aboriginal leadership is informed	
4.	Ensure advisory council activities respect local formal protocols and traditional governance systems of First Nations communities	
5.	Ensure regular meetings, as defined by community needs, that foster strong relationships, accountability and reporting	
6.	Adopt consensus-based or collaborative decision-making wherein all member voices are given equal weight	
7.	Employ mechanisms that ensure respectful dialogue and dispute resolution	
<i>Are leading practices missing on the topic of Aboriginal Advisory Committees?</i>		

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STUDENT HOUSING FOR ABORIGINAL LEARNERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

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Based on your knowledge and experience, please provide feedback on the following practices regarding Student Housing for Aboriginal Learners and their families.

	Leading Practices	Comments and suggested changes
1.	Implement housing policies that set-aside housing spaces for Aboriginal learners and families	
2.	Engage Aboriginal staff, learners, Elders and community partners in the design and development of student residences	
3.	Incorporate consideration of traditional Aboriginal values and current sustainability practices into the housing design process	
4.	Provide day visit space for Elder-in-Residence	
5.	Include Aboriginal activities and ceremonies in residence activities and promote intercultural programs	
6.	Ensure lounges and commons are available for group or individual study as well as health and well-being events and family gatherings	
7.	Make available resources and information about Aboriginal housing providers and affordable/safe housing options close to campus, well before the start of the school year	
<i>Are leading practices missing on the topic of Aboriginal Housing?</i>		

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ASSESSMENT AND BENCHMARKING IN ADULT EDUCATION

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Based on your knowledge and experience, please provide feedback on the following practices regarding effective assessment and benchmarking in adult education program development. Practices have been split into four categories: Pre-Assessment; During Assessment; Post-Assessment; and, Benchmarking.

A. Pre-Assessment Leading Practices		Comments and suggested changes
1.	Provide sufficient preparation and time to foster effective and respectful working relationships between institution and community staff, with particular focus on understanding the broader context of Aboriginal learner needs, and the institution/community resources and supports available to address them	
2.	Arrange suitable space, technology and assessment tools, particularly when supporting smaller communities	
3.	Collaboratively develop processes that ensure learner records and forms are submitted prior to commencing assessment	
4.	Create an individualized learning plan for each learner early in the pre-assessment phase and while institution staff are in the community	
5.	Provide subject specific practice material, including web links to resources if required, and opportunities for review prior to the assessment	
6.	Ensure that test instruments are culturally inclusive, bias-reduced and generate multiple data/methods to improve decision making	
7.	Plan for Elder, cultural support resources and counselling before, during, and after the assessment	
8.	Build rapport and trust with learners, and ensure that learners have an upfront overview of the assessment process and purpose	
<i>Are Pre-Assessment leading practices missing?</i>		
B. During Assessment Leading Practices		Comments and suggested changes
1.	Integrate cultural and social components in the assessment room to ensure learner comfort	
2.	Ensure that the learner understands that the assessment process and purpose is a first and not a final step in their	

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	assessment and education/training or learning plan	
3.	Provide reasonable exam/assessment accommodation based on documented disabilities	
4.	Implement the use of alternative methods, such as dialogue, letter writing and problem solving to assess learner skill levels where required	
5.	Provide learner with face-to-face feedback and use cultural debriefing tools, e.g., personal oral story, in order to discover the unique needs of each learner and construct relevant, individualized education/training and career plans	
<i>Are During Assessment leading practices missing?</i>		
C. Post-Assessment Leading Practices		Comments and suggested changes
1.	Use strength-based advising to identify and build on learner strengths	
2.	Provide learners opportunity to explore and identify optional assessment methods that best fit their individual needs	
3.	Ensure learners are aware of the academic, cultural, personal and financial supports available to support their education/training and career plans	
4.	Ensure unsuccessful learners have opportunities and are welcomed back to explore further options and resources, e.g., about more upgrading to get into their chosen programs, etc.	
5.	Promote learner independence by teaching and encouraging online self-registration while being sensitive to the technological capacity within the community	
6.	Debrief effectiveness of overall assessment process, including accommodation for disabilities if relevant. Identify barriers and ways to provide learners with a continuum of support	
7.	Facilitate initial and ongoing communication between band education coordinators and upgrading instructors to prevent misunderstandings about the placement process and purpose	
<i>Are Post-Assessment leading practices missing?</i>		
D. Benchmarking Leading Practices		Comments and suggested changes
1.	Adopt benchmarks for describing, measuring and recognizing proficiency in literacy, essential skills and adult upgrading and measures/tools that are created or selected in collaboration with community	
2.	Use provincial or national standards, where they are available	
3.	Use benchmarking tools that assess the progress of adult	

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	literacy learners in community literacy programs and that are intended to measure and document a learner's skill level in five different domains (math, reading, writing, oral communications, information technology and participation) at various points in the learning process (e.g. intake and exit points)	
4.	Adopt First Nations language benchmarks, where they exist, to assess proficiency, progress and ability in First Nations language acquisition, comprehension and speaking (and/or fluency)	
5.	Understand that benchmarks are intended as a guide to learning, not a prescription, and they do not assume a standardized curriculum	
6.	Encourage the use, development and sharing of resources and research on integrating culturally appropriate practices, test instruments and tools for adult literacy and upgrading in order to promote emerging Aboriginal-focussed standards in program assessments	
<i>Are Benchmarking leading practices missing?</i>		

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CULTURALLY WELCOMING SPACES AND GATHERING PLACES

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Based on your knowledge and experience, please provide feedback on the following practices regarding the design, development, and implementation of effective Culturally Welcoming Spaces and Gathering Places.

	Leading Practices	Comments and suggested changes
1.	Support local cultural knowledge keepers in providing cultural teaching, protocols and expectations for respectful care and use of Culturally Welcoming Spaces and Gathering Places	
2.	Recognize traditional territory/ies through protocols, traditional names and symbols	
3.	Portray Indigenous diversity of the region and institution in respectful ways	
4.	Support inclusivity, intercultural learning and exchange, while balancing Aboriginal cultural safety considerations	
5.	Include indoor/outdoor reception space for cultural events, welcoming ceremonies, recognition celebrations and ceremonial activities (e.g., Smudge, traditional food preparation, etc.)	
6.	Designate outdoor garden area with Indigenous plants, and sacred spaces for sweat lodge ceremonies, etc.	
7.	Provide student supports and learning/academic resources in the gathering place (e.g., tutoring/study skills, childcare, kitchen, internet access and phone service, etc.), or referrals if those resources are not available	
<i>Are leading practices missing on the topic of Culturally Welcoming Spaces?</i>		

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RESPECTFUL USE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

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Based on your knowledge and experience, please provide feedback on the following practices regarding Respectful Use of Indigenous Knowledge. Practices have been split into three categories: Building Awareness of Indigenous Knowledge; Research and Data Collection; and Pedagogy, Curriculum and Teaching Resources.

	Leading Practices	Comments and suggested changes
Leading Practices in Building Awareness of Indigenous Knowledge		
1.	Acknowledge the relevance to post-secondary institutions and the responsibility to assist in the activities associated with Article 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples : "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."	
2.	Work with communities to develop and implement cultural protocols, practices, knowledge-sharing agreements and memoranda for the transmission, transformation and dissemination of traditional and sacred knowledge	
<i>Are leading practices of Building Awareness in Indigenous Knowledge missing?</i>		
Leading Practices in Research and Data Collection		
1.	Adopt Indigenous research methods and approaches, e.g., Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in Canada (Chapter 9), that are culturally-appropriate, respectful and led by collaborative partnerships between communities and institutional research departments	
2.	Understand Indigenous data collection processes, including collaborative research design and the principles of ownership, control, access and protection	

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3.	Ensure Indigenous community representation on Ethics Boards	
<i>Are leading practices in Research and Data Collection missing?</i>		
Leading Practices in Pedagogy, Curriculum and Teaching Resources		
1.	Ensure that appropriate permissions, clearances, consent or recognition are in place in the creation, adaptation and use of education resources and materials, and that they are specific and co-developed with communities	
2.	Ensure that Indigenous curriculum, resources and materials are accessible to community members and local education programs, and that these accessibility pathways are co-developed and community specified	
3.	Sustain community and institution collaboration and involvement beyond a single course and include cross-department members, e.g. faculty, Aboriginal advisory committee members, and institutional research, teaching and learning representatives	
<i>Are leading practices in Pedagogy, Curriculum and Resources missing?</i>		

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ABORIGINAL MENTORSHIP

For this purpose, *leading practices* have been defined as practices that lead to successful outcomes. These practices have been gathered from the collective wisdom, knowledge and experience of Aboriginal education practitioners, policy-makers and leaders within British Columbia's Aboriginal post-secondary education system.

"Although the term mentor is uncommon in Aboriginal communities, the concept of mentoring is not. Mentoring preserves a way of life based on spirituality, sacredness, reciprocity, education and social responsibility by helping to integrate cultural factors that preserve and protect the health and well-being of our people." (Weinberger, 1999).

Based on your knowledge and experience, please provide feedback on the following practices regarding Aboriginal mentorship.

	Leading Practices	Comments and suggested changes
1.	Identify and recruit Aboriginal student role models who have successfully managed transitions and challenges	
2.	Ensure that Aboriginal peer mentors have the training they need for one-on-one relationship-building and to provide advice and referral	
3.	Provide opportunities for formal and informal mentoring in order to foster effective and authentic relationship development	
4.	Recruit Aboriginal mentors/role models that have community experience and knowledge of Aboriginal perspectives embedded in their life and practice; and, ensure a role for Elders to participate in this process	
5.	Provide non-Aboriginal mentors of Aboriginal students with cultural awareness training that includes the local impacts of residential schools	
6.	Provide faculty and staff with cultural competency training so that they can formally/informally mentor students	
7.	Work closely with other student leadership groups on campus including student ambassadors, international peer helpers and student residence assistants, etc. to create a sense of community and build trust and mutual support	
<i>Are leading practices missing on the topic of Aboriginal Mentorship?</i>		

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PARTNERSHIPS

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Based on your knowledge and experience, please provide feedback on the following practices regarding the design, development, and implementation of effective partnerships between Aboriginal communities and organizations and post-secondary institutions.

	Leading Practices	Comments and suggested changes
1.	Collaborate with community partners, both in discussions and writing of agreements. Demonstrate mutual commitment, transparency and accountability	
2.	Include institutional and community leadership in project oversight	
3.	Develop communication and reporting mechanisms and processes that are transparent, accountable, reciprocal, timebound, and that are adopted by both the Aboriginal community and institutional leadership	
4.	Commit operational resources to sustain programs and services that result from the partnership	
5.	Facilitate shared access to resources (such as library, internet, faculty expertise) for community participants	
6.	Customize course/program offerings to specific community needs	
7.	Plan effective transition strategies for learners to further education/training, graduate studies or to work both within or outside their communities	
<i>Are leading practices missing on the topic of Aboriginal Post-Secondary Partnerships?</i>		

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ABORIGINAL K-12 TO POST-SECONDARY TRANSITIONS

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Based on your knowledge and experience, please provide feedback on the following practices regarding effective transitions between K-12 and post-secondary institutions.

	Leading Practices	Comments and suggested changes
1.	Engage communities to understand their unique barriers and pathways to post-secondary, to identify capacity gaps and to support education planning for transition	
2.	Work with high school counsellors, Aboriginal education workers, Aboriginal Institutes/Adult education centers, employment agencies and Aboriginal education funding agencies to facilitate learner transitions to post-secondary education and training	
3.	Support remediation and provide upgrading where necessary	
4.	Provide opportunities for reciprocal learning between Aboriginal institutes and public post-secondary institutions	
5.	Include families and/or community youth outreach workers, in youth outreach programming for both current and prospective learners	
6.	Support strategies that provide a seamless continuum of learner supports from community to public post-secondary institution, and that mobilize institution/school and community personnel and resources	
7.	Engage community to work on transition plans for Aboriginal learners of all ages in community and in high schools and ensure support includes Elders, peer mentors and Aboriginal transition planners	
8.	Provide cultural competency training for staff and faculty	
<i>Are leading practices missing on the topic of Aboriginal K-12 to Post-Secondary Transitions?</i>		