



University
of Victoria

BOG-Sept 23/25-25

SUBMISSION TO THE UVIC BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Date: September 8, 2025

To: Operations and Facilities Committee

For: Decision

From: Lalita Kines, Interim Vice President Indigenous

cc: Acting President and Vice-Chancellor

Meeting Date: September 23, 2025

Subject: Approval of Indigenous Citizenship Declaration Policy & Procedures

Recommendation:

THAT the Operations and Facilities Committee recommend to the Board of Governors that the Board of Governors approve the Indigenous Citizenship Declaration Policy and Associated Procedures, effective November 1st, 2025.

Background:

The Office of the VP Indigenous (OVPI) has designed a revised eligibility process for Indigenous-specific opportunities that result in material gain. The Indigenous Citizenship Declaration (ICD) Policy moves away from reliance on Indigenous self-identification to a more robust process of affirming Indigenous Citizenship. Applicants/candidates for all Indigenous-specific opportunities administered by UVic will be required to provide a declaration of Indigenous Citizenship alongside supporting information.

This process will ensure that (1) opportunities of material gain that are designated for Indigenous Peoples are accessed by Indigenous Peoples, and that (2) the eligibility requirements for these opportunities are consistent with the ways that Indigenous Nations, Peoples and communities determine their Citizenship.

Timeline:

The intention to develop a policy was announced in Spring 2024 after several months of consulting with members of Elders Voices, researching the approaches taken by other Canadian post-secondaries, and forming a committee to lead a diverse and robust engagement process.

Impact:

The ICD Policy will impact access to every Indigenous-specific opportunity administered by the university. The careful implementation of the policy with dedicated support staff will strengthen and build confidence in the ways that Indigenous Peoples bring their distinct ways of knowing and being into teaching, governance and service at the university. The ICD Policy was purposefully designed to ensure that the university is prepared to respect and adhere to the distinct ways that Indigenous Nations determine and affirm their Citizens through their own legal orders. The Policy represents an important step towards further efforts to uphold Indigenous Laws within university systems and processes.

The successful implementation of the ICD Policy, the first of its kind in British Columbia, will demonstrate that UVic is taking a proactive approach to address issues of Indigenous identity fraud within academic spaces. With adequate capacity, the OVPI is positioned to provide leadership in the creation and harmonization of policies across BC Post-Secondaries aligned with the Indigenous Nations served by those institutions.

Policy Summary

The ICD Policy and Procedures have been appended to this submission. Five important areas are highlighted to summarize the purpose and requirements of the new eligibility process established by the ICD Policy:

- *Intentions (ICD Policy Section 2.00):* The University recognizes the critical importance of Indigenous-specific Opportunities that are intended to: (i) achieve diverse and equitable representation in an occupation, unit or program; (ii) strengthen Indigenous ways of knowing and being in teaching, governance and service; and/or (iii) otherwise enrich the ways we accomplish the university's academic mission and serve our community. The goal of this policy is to ensure that these intentions are honoured and respected.
- *Scope (ICD Policy Section 10.00):* This policy applies to the eligibility criteria for Indigenous-specific Opportunities that result in Material Gain. The Indigenous Citizenship Declaration (ICD) Process is activated by an application process where an

Applicant's eligibility or special consideration is conditional on an assertion of being Indigenous. This policy interacts with and expands upon the University's approved Special Hiring Programs and other equity- or distinctions-based eligibility procedures, as further defined in the Associated Procedures.

- *Policy Statement (ICD Policy Section 11.00):* Candidates, applicants or nominees for Indigenous-specific Opportunities that may result in Material Gain are required to confirm their eligibility through the Indigenous Citizenship Declaration (ICD) Process by providing: (i) a Declaration of Indigenous Citizenship and (ii) Supporting Information.
 - *"Indigenous-specific Opportunities" (ICD Policy Definitions):* refer to programs, procedures, competitions and nominations (e.g. Special Hiring Programs, designated funds, reserved seats & etc.) administered by the University, or administered by employees representing the University, intended to: (a) achieve diverse and equitable representation in an occupation, unit or program; (b) strengthen Indigenous ways of knowing and being in teaching, governance and service; and/or (c) otherwise enrich the ways we accomplish the University's academic mission and serve our community.
 - *"Declaration" (ICD Policy Definitions):* refers to a claim, assertion and/or statement of an Applicant's Indigenous Citizenship with a specific and recognized Indigenous Nation, People or Community (singular or plural). On a case-by-case basis, and recognizing complex circumstances, additional, verifiable information may be required to provide an Extended Declaration.
- *Distinctions-Based Implementation (ICD Policy Section 12.00):* The implementation of this policy will respect and uphold distinct protocols and requirements for Citizenship (or equivalent understandings) as determined and expressed by an Indigenous Nation, People or Community in an Agreement with the University (or a partnered institution).
 - *Authority of Indigenous Nations (ICD Policy Definitions):* "Indigenous Laws" refer to the principles and processes that Indigenous Nations, Peoples and Communities use and have always used to govern themselves. Separate from western laws, Indigenous Laws are derived from Indigenous Peoples' societies and their distinct sources of authorities.
- *Case-by-Case Review in Areas of Complexity/Uncertainty (ICD Procedures Section 7.00):* Applications that include an Extended Declaration of circumstances and complexities outlined in Policy Sections 15.00 a-e, may require an extended review.
 - ICD Procedures Section 8.00: Where an extended review of an application is required to assess and determine eligibility based on a wholistic and informed

understanding the Applicant's Extended Declaration and provided Supporting Information, the PIM or approved designate may invite the Applicant to participate in an extended review process undertaken by a committee of reviewers.

Previous Consultation:

After an initial consultation with Elders Voices in Fall 2023, OVPI completed a year of engaging with Indigenous members of the UVic community and collaborating with relevant campus partners (i.e. Equity and Human Rights, Human Resources, Faculty Relations, the Faculty Association, the Office of the Registrar and Enrolment Management, CUPE and PEA Unions, University Systems, etc.). A summary of these engagement sessions can be found in the attached External Report Draft. The ICD Policy is scheduled to come into effect in Fall 2025. While a few other Canadian PSIs have introduced similar policies, many in alignment with the new Tri-Agency Guidelines, UVic will be the first BC PSI to introduce an Indigenous citizenship declaration policy. Our team periodically communicates and collaborates with these institutional partners.

After a year-long engagement process, drafts of the policy and procedures have been brought to governing bodies for additional feedback and review which has been incorporated for BOG's approval in Fall 2025. Implementation, slated for November 2025, has been supported by: the development of a secure ICD Application Portal, the harmonization of HR systems with new eligibility procedures, and the creation of two new staff positions within the OVPI to lead the coordination and navigation of the policy.

Planned Further Action:

Since sharing drafts of the ICD Policy and Procedures with the Board of Governors in June, staff members within the OVPI have continued working with University Systems to develop and test an ICD application portal. This centralized and secure platform will support the implementation of the policy and communications with relevant offices that are responsible for the administration of student bursaries and awards. Further conversations are planned with the Development Office and Student Awards and Financial Aid to revise and clarify a distinctions-based approach to student awards.

Our team continues to work closely with VPRI and regularly monitors the Tri-Agency's directives on Indigenous Citizenship/Membership to ensure that this Policy and Process can effectively respond to external, Indigenous eligibility requirements for major grants and initiatives. The Policy Implementation Manager is reviewing a series of University Policies with the intention of recommending language that strengthens the University's ability to

recognize and carefully address instances of Indigenous identity fraud, which are beyond the scope of this Policy.

The Policy and Procedures will undergo regular reviews after approval and implementation. Good planning, as our dear Elders have shared with us, requires that we remain flexible and prepared for disruption. We approach implementation with humility, and we will continue to accept guidance towards improving our systems and processes on an ongoing basis.

Basis for Jurisdiction:

Operations & Facilities Committee TOR

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Attachment(s):

- Project Webpage: uvic.ca/ovpi/icd
- Appended ICD Policy
- Appended ICD Procedures
- External Report Summer 2025 Draft