

UVic Smudging Guidelines

January 2020

1. Introduction

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the University of Victoria stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

UVic's Smudging Guidelines are aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the UVic Indigenous Plan's commitment to offer places and opportunities for Indigenous students, faculty and staff to take part in traditional ceremonies and practices on campus.

These guidelines were created by a team of Indigenous staff, faculty and graduate students, as well as non-Indigenous staff at UVic. The Smudging Guidelines seek to further reinforce anti-racism, anti-colonialism, and anti-oppression, equity and equality principles.

The University of Victoria Executive, Deans, and other leaders will:

- Support ceremonies that celebrate and encourage diversity among the University community.
- Provide educational opportunities to staff, faculty, and librarians such as Indigenous Cultural Acumen Training and Equity and Human Rights' anti-racism training to permit them to understand the importance of the Indigenous traditional ways of life. Educational materials will be shared through social media, print and websites.

"We understand that the commitment to reconciliation also involves ensuring that UVic is a racism-free, inclusive environment that embraces the many diverse cultures present in the broader university community. Universities have a responsibility to ensure that students, faculty and staff are knowledgeable about the history of abuse and racism with respect to the Indigenous peoples of Canada, and the enduring and negative impacts of colonialism." Indigenous Plan, 2017-2020

2. What is smudging?

Smudging is a spiritual ceremony practiced by some, but not all, Indigenous peoples. A smudging ceremony has many spiritual purposes, such as cleansing, purifying or blessing the mind, body and spirit of those taking part. It involves the burning of sweetgrass, sage, cedar and/or tobacco in a shell or bowl and using a hand or feather to direct the smoke towards the person smudging. Sage and cedar produce a very strong and distinct aroma but the smoke associated with it is minimal and lasts a very short time. Sweetgrass has a very mild aroma and produces less smoke. Another type of Indigenous ceremony that could include the use of smoke includes the pipe ceremony, which uses tobacco.

Smudging is not limited to Indigenous peoples, as non-Indigenous people can also participate in smudging ceremonies.

3. Where may smudging take place on campus?

Indoor smudging

Smudging ceremonies can take place in buildings and areas designed or modified by the university for this purpose, or where the ventilation/fire systems can accommodate smudging. The following buildings have been identified as facility-friendly for smudging. This list will be updated as other buildings on campus are tested or modified.

- First Peoples House
- HSD B211 Indigenous Student Support Centre
- Saunders Annex

For those wanting to hold a smudging ceremony in another building or room, please contact Facilities Management at smudgingrequest@uvic.ca at least 3 working days in advance of the ceremony. Facilities Management will assist with

requests on a shorter time scale on a best effort basis. Note: some ventilation/fire systems cannot accommodate smudging; Facilities Management staff will work with organizers to find suitable spaces.

Outdoor smudging

Outdoor smudging can be practiced anywhere on campus, as long as it takes place away from open windows, doors and building air intake units.

4. Fire safety relating to smudging

Do not leave burning material unattended. Extinguish the burning plant material after the conclusion of the smudging ceremony.

Event organizers should know the location of the nearest fire extinguisher, be aware of nearby combustible materials and keep embers in a heat proof container until cold to the touch before discarding.

When smudging outdoors, please observe fire safety practices around dry grass and forested areas, especially during times when the fire hazard level is elevated.

5. New'ews sn ?ey? šweleqwəns | Bring in your good feelings

Smudging ceremonies may be performed by an individual in their office, by an instructor, Elder or knowledge keeper with students in a classroom, or as part of a community event or gathering in the spaces identified in section #3. It is the responsibility of each department and faculty to collaboratively develop communications plans around notification.

Suggestions for communicating to people in neighbouring offices include and are not limited to:

- Providing advanced notice prior to the ceremony
- Keeping the door closed during the ceremony
- Posting a notice on the door that a smudging ceremony is taking place