



CTL Welcome Guide:

UBCO's Relationship with the Host Nation



Welcome to UBC Okanagan

The University of British Columbia's Okanagan Campus is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the syilx people of the Okanagan Nation. [The Centre for Teaching and Learning](#) team is grateful to the syilx people who have cared for this land since time immemorial. We appreciate every opportunity we get to learn from the land and community. We remain dedicated to thoughtful partnerships with [Okanagan Nation](#) members and Indigenous communities across Turtle Island. We are committed to teaching and learning that amplifies Indigenous voices meaningfully and creates a better future for all.

As part of our commitment to [UBC's Indigenous Strategic Plan \(ISP\)](#), [The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action](#), [The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#), and many more Indigenous initiatives, we want to invite our guests to join us in learning and doing more. The Centre for Teaching and Learning has developed this visitor guide. We hope that this enriches your knowledge of the Okanagan Nation and provides you with important information for your time here.

We encourage you to learn more about the Okanagan Nation before or during your visit. You are invited to learn more about [UBC Okanagan's relationship with the host nation](#).

Culture and Protocol: We aim to begin meetings with a territory or land acknowledgment. This denotes our gratitude to the syilx people of the Okanagan Nation and shares the information that the University is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the syilx people. The term unceded is key here as treaties were never signed, and this territory was not traded or freely given. This might be different from where you are visiting from or if you have visited treaty territories before.

We are moving away from calling this a territory where we “live, work, and play”, this can feel disrespectful due to the fact that many Indigenous people do not have basic rights to their territory let alone the ability to “play” on it. We are moving toward honestly identifying our positionality, relationship to place, and ongoing commitments to being better partners.

You may be lucky enough to attend an event that features a territorial welcome from a member of the Okanagan Nation. This is sometimes accompanied by the Okanagan Song. [Learn more about and listen to the Okanagan Song](#).

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During the winter months, syilx protocol tells us to move counterclockwise around circles. You might notice this during introductions. Circle protocol varies regionally and seasonally. Current protocol guidelines will be shared. Integrating syilx traditions in our work is important to us and strengthens the resurgence of Indigenous traditions. This is integral to the decolonization and Indigenization work that we hope to continue.

Language: nsyilxcən is the local language. It is part of the Salish language family but different from Salish neighbours, like the Spokane, the Nlaka'pamux, and the Secwepemc. nsyilxcən is spoken in all the districts of the Okanagan territory with varying dialects. In nsyilxcən capital letters are not used. Capitalizing letters is not seen as necessary to denote hierarchy or importance. First Voices allows us to hear Indigenous languages.

During introductions, you may hear someone say something like:
way' x̣ast x̣l'x̣al't isḳẉist - this means, hello, good day, my name is.

UBCO is excited to offer the nsyilxcn, n̄eʔkepmx, and st'át'imc language fluency programs in collaboration with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and the En'Owkin Centre.

Learning Opportunities and Resources: Another fantastic learning opportunity is the sncewips Heritage Museum in Westbank. This museum features incredible lessons about syilx history, tradition, artwork, and contemporary topics. If you can book a guided tour with Coralee Miller, you are in for an extra treat!

On campus, we have shílíʔtn, a permanent installation by syilx artist Les Louis and co-funded by the Okanagan Nation Alliance and UBC. This was erected in September of 2016 in the central courtyard to commemorate the 10th anniversary of UBC Okanagan and the UBC Centennial.

You will surely hear about "Ogopogo" while you are in the Okanagan. While Ogopogo may have turned into a bit of a mascot, the story behind it, and the true meaning, is beautiful. n̄x̣aʔx̣ʔitḳẉ is the spirit of the lake and reminds us of our duty to live in partnership and relationship with the water and Mother Earth.

Our goal is to make you feel comfortable on your visit. We hope that if you have any questions or concerns about this information, or something else, you contact us.

(insert contact info)