



Honourarium Policy

Category: Payments
Review Cycle: *Last revision: 2026 Next Revision: 2028*
Policy Sponsor: President

I. Overview

In the course of regular Association business an individual may contribute their time and/or expertise to support Association initiatives. This policy outlines the process by which these individuals may be compensated for these contributions to the Association.

II. Authority

The President, the Executive Board, or MRFA Standing Committees, by motion, may authorize expenditures from their approved budgets in recognition of contributions made by individuals to facilitate MRFA events.

III. Eligibility

This policy shall normally apply to providing honoraria for Contract faculty and individuals external to the Association. This policy shall not normally apply to full time and permanent faculty for whom service is part of regular workload.

IV. Rates

All such payments shall be considered honoraria and may be made in accordance with the following formula (\$100 per hour of session facilitation) which is based on SICH calculations and the upper end of the Contract Faculty Grid.

V. Process

Following approval, the applicable committee shall confirm payment arrangements with the recipient and, then, inform the Senior Administrative and Faculty Relations Officer of all relevant details to facilitate payment processing.

VI. Exceptions and Limitations

- Honouraria and gifts provided for Indigenous guests sharing Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Doing and Being shall be in accordance with Appendix I
- Payments made to individuals beyond the \$100 per hour limit shall require prior approval by the Audit and Finance Committee.
- Where a committee cannot accommodate this rate for an honorarium within its allocated budget, it may, by motion, authorize a lower rate if reasonable for the service rendered. Where an honorarium may be inappropriate, committees are authorized to provide MRFA swag on hand and/or a thank you card as a token of appreciation in lieu of an honorarium.
- Contract Faculty members receiving an honorarium under this policy shall not be eligible to receive a Contract Service Honorarium for the same event.

Appendix I. Indigenous Honorarium Guidelines

Principles

Honoraria should not be viewed as a payment for service, but as a way of honoring the sharing of Traditional Knowledge and practices (Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Doing and Being). Honorarium can be issued out of petty cash, with a cheque, or gift card . The honoraria is offered privately between the Indigenous individual and the person that offered cultural protocol. Members engaging Indigenous knowledge keepers may wish to first refer to Appendix II and resources provided by the Inisikim Centre or the Office of Indigenization and Decolonization, or engage with members from those areas of the institution.

Incidental Expenses or Travel Reimbursement

If engagement of an Indigenous individual requires travel, it is appropriate for the institution to provide remuneration for these expenses. These expenses can include but are not limited to: kilometer rate, meals (allowance rate), parking and accommodations. Normally, reimbursement is processed by using the Non- Employee Reimbursement Form. However, in certain circumstances, it is allowable to use the Indigenous Honoraria form if travel costs only include mileage and/or meal allowances.

Gifts of Appreciation

(e.g. cultural gifts such as blankets, fabric, baskets, artwork) are often, but not always, publicly given after the Knowledge is shared. Gifts of appreciation shall not normally exceed \$100. Tobacco shall be gifted to Elders.

Recommended Honorarium

The amounts indicated below are a recommendation only; consideration is based on budgetary requirements of the activity and/or committee and what is deemed meaningful in each situation.

Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers (events such as opening prayer, guidance, Tipi teachings and setup and/or closing prayer)

- 0 - 1 hour: \$150 / person, 1 - 4 hours: \$300, and greater than 4 hours: \$500
 - Note - Some Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers have their own helpers or attendants. If the Elder or knowledge keeper has their own attendants/helper they should be provided with an honourarium as well. If the Elder or Knowledge Keeper does not have their own helpers or attendants then the organizing committee/individual needs to ensure there is someone to graciously host and support the Elder while engaged in the activity.

Cultural Artist (activities such as storytelling, sewing, beading, tufting, drum making and quilling)

- Half-day \$300 - plus supplies (2-4 hours)

Facilitator

- Half-day \$300 (2-4 hours)

Traditional Performers

- \$150 (0-4 hours) / person

Appendix II. Guidelines to Support Building Relationships with Indigenous Communities and Individuals

1. Begin with relational, long-term intent

- Recognize that engagement with Indigenous community members is **not a one-off transaction** but part of building ongoing, reciprocal relationships. The goal is meaningful long-term relationships rather than viewing interactions as a one-time knowledge exchange or transaction.
- Take time at the outset to consider your motivations and the purpose of engaging Indigenous knowledge-holders: What is the purpose? How will the knowledge/relationship be honoured, and how will this connect into longer term work? “Why are you seeking assistance from an Elder or Knowledge Keeper?” and “Do you plan to engage with the invited guest beforehand as part of creating a relational space?”
- Respect that each Indigenous community, Nation, and individual will have their own cultural protocols and ways of engaging. There is no ‘one size fits all’. It is appropriate to seek guidance from your community contact as to whether an engagement event or process should include an Elder or Knowledge Keeper, what their role will be, and what an appropriate honourarium is. Deviation from the MRFA’s Honourarium policy is permissible and input should be provided to the Bylaws and Policy Committee should it be appropriate to reconsider the honourarium rates outlined in this policy.

2. Invitation and outreach – thoughtful, respectful, clear

- When extending an invitation to an Indigenous Elder/Knowledge Keeper/community member, make the request as early as possible, allow sufficient time, and provide clear information about what you are asking: who, what, when, where, why, what role, what expectation, what support. Do not wait until the last minute to invite an Indigenous Elder/guest. Clearly discuss your expectations in advance.
- In the invitation, honour the Indigenous person’s time, role and expertise. Include discussions of appropriate honouraria (or compensation) and covering of travel, accommodations, meals etc.
- Ask for the individual’s preferences with respect to protocol: how they prefer to be addressed, whether they will bring a helper/guest, what accommodations they may need (quiet space, dietary needs, accessibility).
- If relevant, enquire about whether traditional protocols such as offering tobacco or cloth or other cultural gift/offering are appropriate.
- Be transparent about the event/process: timing, location (including maps, parking, arrival instructions), whether there will be smudging, ceremony, drumming, or special cultural practice; the invitation should clearly specify.

3. Honour, reciprocity and compensation

- View the engagement as a gift of knowledge and culture, which calls for reciprocity. Offer an honourarium or gift of thanks. Honouraria should be presented as a *gift in exchange* for knowledge, ceremonies or blessings—*not a transaction*.

- Ensure that contributions of Indigenous knowledge are acknowledged properly (with respect, not tokenised) and the person is treated with dignity.

4. Cultural and logistical protocols during engagement

- Designate a host or point-person who will coordinate logistics, greet the Elder/Knowledge Keeper, escort them to the venue, ensure their comfort, and check on their needs (quiet space, refreshment, help).
- Respect speaking protocols: e.g., do not interrupt an Elder/Knowledge Keeper when speaking, do not minimize or demean cultural practices, do not use Indigenous persons for spectacle.
- Be aware of ceremony/smudge/drum elements: If the session may include smudging, drumming or other sacred practices, check in advance with campus safety or relevant offices for any necessary preparations (ventilation, alarms, scheduling).

5. Follow-through, reciprocity, and sustaining relationships

- After the event, follow up with thanks, share any outcomes (reports, reflections) with the knowledge-holder/teacher. Consider how you will maintain the relationship beyond the event.
- Seek feedback: ask how the process went, if they had any concerns, what could be improved. This is part of respectful, responsible engagement.
- Build opportunities for further collaboration rather than one-off. Reflect on how the knowledge shared can be integrated into other aspects of your role, the institution, or the MRFA in ways that support Indigenous self-determination and voice.
- Recognize Indigenous data/knowledge sovereignty: in engagements where knowledge is shared or recorded, be mindful of rights, control, ownership and how knowledge is being used. Indigenous traditional knowledge remains in the control of Indigenous people.

6. Avoid tokenism and superficial inclusion

It is not enough to invite an Indigenous Elder/Knowledge Keeper simply as a symbolic gesture: avoid ‘tokenism’ that involves Indigenous people at only the most superficial of levels (e.g., ticking boxes or one-time engagements). Think deeply about the purpose of engagement: Is the knowledge-holder being used to fill a checkbox? Or are they genuinely shaping and enriching the work of the association/institution? Ensure that Indigenous perspectives are built in from the beginning of the planning, not bolted on at the end.

References

- BCCNM – Guidelines for Working with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers (PDF) [Link BCCNM](#)
- Brandon University – Guidelines for Respectful Engagement with Knowledge Keepers & Elders [Link Brandon University](#)
- Concordia University – Indigenous Elder and Community Protocols [Link Concordia University](#)

- Engineers Canada – Guideline on Indigenous Consultation and Engagement [Link Engineers Canada](#)
- IPC AKnowledgeBasket – Working Respectfully with Indigenous People and Their Knowledge System [Link ipcknowledgebasket.ca](#)
- University of Calgary – Cultural Protocol and Cash Honoraria Guidelines (Oct 2023) Link [live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca](#)
- University of Ottawa – Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers Reference Guide (PDF) [Link University of Ottawa](#)
- University of Western Ontario – Guidelines for Working with Indigenous Community Members (PDF) [Link indigenous.uwo.ca](#)