



Accreditation of Yukon First Nations Traditional Knowledge, Cultural and Language Learning Policy	
Minister Approval: September 26, 2024	Effective Date: September 30, 2024

PREAMBLE

The purpose of this policy is to enable Yukon First Nation governments to design, deliver, assess, and provide notice of completion for accredited cultural, language, and traditional knowledge programming for Yukon students.

The Department of Education acknowledges that it is in the early stages of a long journey on the path of decolonization and Indigenization. The Accreditation of Yukon First Nations Traditional Knowledge, Cultural and Language Learning Policy is aligned with the vision and goals of the *Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners*.

The *Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners* includes fourteen learner outcome statements and ten value statements, developed collaboratively with Yukon First Nation governments and with participation from education partners.

Learner Outcomes:

All Yukon learners will:

- Know who they are and where they come from, and feel they belong.
- Be resilient and emotionally intelligent.
- Be able to transition through their educational experience successfully.
- Understand and appreciate that they are part of the land, part of the water.
- Be happy.
- Know what they need to be healthy and grounded.
- Be financially literate.
- Understand Yukon First Nation history, culture, protocols, and worldviews.
- Meet or exceed literacy, communication, and numeracy expectations for each grade level.
- Have the ability to access, understand, and analyze a wide range of information.

- Have the skills, abilities, and confidence to develop and achieve their career and life goals.
- Actively try to make the world a better place.
- Have the skills, abilities, and confidence to use technology and adapt to the use of new technology.
- Have increased exposure to, and opportunities for learning, Yukon First Nation languages.

Value Statements:

These Value Statements are identified as foundational to the learner outcomes.

We Value:

- Successful transitions for students
- Safety
- Reconciliation
- The history and living culture of the 14 Yukon First Nations
- Support for teachers
- Emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being
- Strengths-based approach
- Empathy
- Relationships
- Options and opportunities

These statements reflect the insights of First Nations, educators, students, and Yukon citizens. They aim to improve student outcomes within the Yukon education system, particularly for First Nations and rural learners. This collaborative development process was guided by a reconciliation lens, with deep listening to ensure that the outcome statements are clear, remain relevant over time, and reflect the cultures and diversity of Yukon. The Department of Education has adopted the recommended learner outcomes and value statements.

The Accreditation of Yukon First Nations Cultural, Language, and Traditional Knowledge Learning Policy supports the joint goals of Indigenization, decolonization, collaboration, and shared authority for education.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Under section 17.7 of certain Yukon First Nation Self-Government Agreements, the Government of Yukon and the Yukon First Nations have agreed to negotiate the

division and sharing of responsibility for the design, delivery, and administration of education programs delivered within the Yukon First Nations' Traditional Territories.

The Education Act mandates that each Yukon student must receive an education program that meets their individual needs. The Act also includes obligations to ensure that the Yukon education system promotes understanding of the history, language, culture, rights, and values of Yukon First Nations. It requires that the cultural, linguistic and historical heritage of Yukon First Nations is incorporated into the prescribed courses of study used in Yukon schools, and that every Yukon school includes activities in its program that are relevant to the culture, heritage, traditions and practices of the Yukon First Nation it serves.

Yukon First Nation (YFN) governments are working collaboratively with Yukon educators to support an educational model that reflects and honours Yukon First Nations' ways of knowing, doing, and being. This is an essential component of the education programs delivered to Yukon students. The Department of Education is committed to these partnerships, ensuring that the curriculum provided in all Yukon classrooms aligns with the educational needs of Yukon First Nations and the responsibilities outlined in the Act and Yukon's modern treaties.

The Department of Education acknowledges that learning facilitated by First Nation Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and YFN governments is a crucial part of every student's education. The Department also recognizes the importance of cultural knowledge transmission that occurs outside the formal school context. Furthermore, the Department affirms that supporting language revitalization, cultural safety, and ceremonial practices enhances the emotional wellbeing of all students.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and processes that enable YFN governments to design, deliver, assess, and provide notice of completion for accredited cultural, language, and traditional knowledge programming. This programming may be delivered by Yukon First Nation Elders, Knowledge Keepers, YFN government employees, or individuals or organizations deemed qualified by the YFN government.

The Department of Education will ensure that all Yukon schools offer students opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nations' histories, cultures, languages, and ways of knowing, doing, and being.

For decades, Yukon First Nations have expressed their desire to take a greater role in determining educational programming for their children. The *Together Today for Our*

Children Tomorrow document, for example, emphasizes this call and highlights that each Yukon First Nation and individual community is distinct and unique.

As per the recommendations of the [Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly—2019](#), the Department of Education will continue collaborating with Yukon First Nations to implement actions that support the joint priorities of the Joint Education Action Plan (JEAP).

This policy supports the goals identified under each of the joint priorities of the Joint Education Action Plan (JEAP):

1. K-12 Culture and Language
2. Authority, Control and Responsibility
3. Sustainability, Supports and Success
4. Closing the Academic Achievement Education Gap

It also reflects several of the guiding principles outlined in the JEAP:

1. YFN education is based upon traditional knowledge, cultural practices, histories and languages.
2. YFN education is life-long, holistic and values respect, caring and teaching in a way that meets the needs of YFN students.
3. YFN education fosters the process for YFN students to develop proud cultural identity while preparing to succeed in continuing education.
4. YFN communities, families and students need to be involved and engaged in education initiatives.
5. Each individual YFN determines local goals and initiatives with respect to education and the parties to the *Joint Education Action Plan* support and assist.
6. All parties will work together to ensure the effective and efficient use of available resources and existing funding and to secure additional strategic funding from governments if available.
7. The Yukon Education Act recognizes that for a high quality education system to evolve in the Yukon, meaningful partnerships and greater parent and public participation is needed.

Additionally, this policy responds in part to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's [Calls to Action](#) , particularly Action 62, with calls to:

- (ii.) increase opportunities for students to learn from “Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods” and;

(iv.) facilitate increased “Aboriginal content in education.”

This policy formally recognizes the value of Yukon First Nations cultural and language learning.

Credits earned through these learning activities serve as elective credits within the BC Dogwood Graduation Program. Additionally, BC now requires at least four credits of Indigenous-focused coursework to meet graduation requirements, and these credits will fulfill that requirement.

DEFINITIONS

“Cultural, language, and traditional knowledge learning” may also be referred to as cultural, language, and traditional knowledge activities in this document.

“Elder” is a person whose wisdom about spirituality, culture, and life is recognized. The community and individuals typically seek the advice and assistance of Elders in various areas of both traditional and contemporary issues. Advanced age is common but not a requirement for an Elder.

“Elective credits” are credits earned by students to support their academic, career, or personal interests that are not part of the “required credits” in the B.C. Dogwood Graduation Program.

“External credits” are credits earned through courses, programs, or activities outside the standard B.C. curriculum, delivered by external organizations.

“Indigenous-focused Graduation Requirement” refers to the requirement that students must complete at least four credits of Indigenous-focused coursework at the Grade 10–12 level to meet graduation requirements.

“Knowledge Keeper” is a person who identifies as First Nation and is recognized by their community as having knowledge and understanding of the traditions, culture, and spiritual and social practices of their people.

“Transboundary First Nation” refers to any of the Indigenous governments or groups that assert Aboriginal rights in the Yukon, including Tetlit Gwich’in Council (TGC), Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC), Gwich’in Tribal Council (GTC), Acho Dene Koe First Nation (ADKFN), Dease River First Nation (DRFN), Kwadacha First Nation (KFN), Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN), and Tahltan Central Government (TCG).

“Transfer Standing” (or “TS”) is a grade used by the BC Ministry of Education to indicate successful completion of credits without assigning numerical or letter grades.

“Students” are individuals enrolled in a Yukon secondary school or homeschooled individuals aged 14 and older. While the *Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners* uses the term “learners” to reflect a lifetime of learning, the *Accreditation of Yukon First Nations Cultural, Language, and Traditional Knowledge Learning Policy* specifically refers to students enrolled in Yukon secondary school or homeschooled individuals aged 14 and older.

“Yukon First Nation (YFN)” means any of the 14 Yukon First Nations.

POLICY STATEMENT

Yukon First Nation (YFN) governments may facilitate the development, delivery, and assessment of accredited learning activities related to Yukon First Nations’ culture, language, and traditional knowledge. Successful completion of these activities will result in elective course credits that meet the Indigenous-focused graduation requirement and will be added to a student’s academic record to apply towards the B.C. Dogwood Graduation Program, subject to the conditions outlined below.

Eligible Yukon First Nations cultural, language, and traditional knowledge learning activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Cultural, language, and traditional knowledge programming facilitated or delivered by YFN governments outside of the Yukon Education school calendar (e.g., weekends, winter break, March break, evenings, summer break). Examples include Hide Tanning Camp, Fish Camp, Muskrat Camp, First Hunt, and First Fish.
- Cultural, language, and traditional knowledge programming delivered by Yukon First Nation Elders and Knowledge Keepers within the school schedule in partnership with Education staff, specifically when the programming is not part of a pre-existing course for which students will receive credit. Examples may include a trapping course or a hunting trip.
- Land-based experiences facilitated or delivered by YFN governments, Elders, and/or Knowledge Keepers where traditional knowledge and skills are taught. Examples include seasonal hunts, traditional medicine or foods learning programs, or formal on-the-land learning programs.
- Cultural, language, and traditional knowledge programming facilitated by YFN governments, Elders, and/or Knowledge Keepers where traditional knowledge

and skills are taught, and cultural development is supported. Examples include First Nations spiritual or ceremonial practices, potlatches, singing, drumming, dancing, traditional sports programs, and carving/traditional arts.

- Other learning activities not outlined above, as approved by the Assistant Deputy Minister of Student Learning and First Nations Initiatives in collaboration with the YFN government that designed the activity.

The eligibility of learning activities for credit in accordance with this policy will be determined by the YFN government that has designed and is delivering the programming.

Learning activities may be delivered by a Yukon First Nations Elder, Knowledge Keeper, government employee, or any individual or organization deemed qualified by the YFN government (e.g., a contractor or another Yukon First Nation). For clarity, learning activities do not need to be delivered or assessed by a teacher employed by the Government of Yukon.

The YFN government will designate an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, YFN government employee, or any individual or organization deemed qualified and knowledgeable about the student's engagement and achievement in the learning activities to assess whether the student has successfully completed the activity.

The YFN government will provide the student with written notice of completion upon successful completion of the learning activities.

Upon receipt of the notice of completion, the school shall add the credits to the student's academic record.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Under section 17.7 of certain Yukon First Nation Self-Government Agreements, the Government of Yukon and the Yukon First Nations have agreed to negotiate the division and sharing of responsibility for the design, delivery, and administration of education programs, including those to which this policy applies, delivered within the Yukon First Nations' traditional territories.
- The Department of Education will affirm, honour, and promote participation in programming offered by YFN governments, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, or individuals or organizations considered qualified by a YFN government to design and deliver the programming.
- YFN governments that wish to offer accredited programming will develop, approve, and deliver the eligible learning activities.

- YFN governments that wish to offer accredited programming will assume the duty of care for students participating in any programming they deliver.
- YFN governments that wish to offer accredited programming will designate an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, YFN government employee, or individual/contractor deemed qualified, with first-hand knowledge of a student's engagement and achievement in the learning activities, to assess whether the student has successfully completed the activity.
- YFN governments that wish to offer accredited programming will provide students with a written notice of completion when the learning activities have been successfully completed.
- Guidance counsellors (or designated school-based staff) will, upon receipt of the notice of completion, add the appropriate credits to the student's academic record and keep a copy of the notice in the student's cumulative file.
- School staff will provide the necessary academic support if a student misses regular school programming due to participation in YFN cultural, language, and traditional knowledge learning activities.

PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

DESIGN

- The program of learning activities will be documented by the YFN government in writing and include descriptions of the activities, the number of hours students will spend engaged in the activities, and who or what will determine whether the student has successfully completed the learning activities at a basic, advanced, or leadership level of proficiency.
- Approximately 30 hours of learning facilitated by Elders, Knowledge Keepers, YFN government employees, or individuals/contractors deemed qualified by the YFN government equals 1 credit. A full course is 4 credits (approximately 100–120 hours).
- Learning activities may be designed at three different levels:
 - **Introductory level** (Grade 10 course code): A first-time or introductory experience where students are expected to demonstrate a basic level of proficiency.
 - **Advanced level** (Grade 11 course code): For students who are either repeating the learning activities or able to demonstrate an advanced level of proficiency.

- **Leadership level** (Grade 12 course code): For students who are able to lead or teach other students during the learning activities due to their advanced level of proficiency.
- Programs may be developed that allow students to receive up to 12 elective credits (4 Grade 10 credits, 4 Grade 11 credits, and 4 Grade 12 credits) by repeating learning activities that require increasing levels of proficiency, and/or leadership.
- When YFN governments determine that the learning activities are eligible in accordance with this policy, no notice to or permission from the Department of Education is required prior to the activities being delivered.

DELIVERY

- Learning activities may be delivered by a Yukon First Nations Elder, Knowledge Keeper, or government employee.
- Learning activities may also be delivered by any individual or organization deemed qualified by the Yukon First Nation government (e.g., a contractor, a different Yukon First Nation, etc.).

ASSESSMENT

- Students should be informed, prior to the start of the learning activities, about what they need to demonstrate to successfully complete the activity.
- Students should be given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning.
- Learning activities may be assessed by a Yukon First Nations Elder, Knowledge Keeper, or YFN government employee in a manner consistent with Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being.
- Learning activities may also be assessed by any individual deemed qualified by the Yukon First Nation government (e.g., a contractor, or an individual from a different Yukon First Nation) in a manner consistent with Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being.
- The assessment will determine whether the student has successfully completed the learning activity.

NOTICE OF COMPLETION

- The Yukon First Nation will provide a written notice of completion (e.g., a form, letter, or certificate) to each student upon successful completion of the learning activities that includes:

- Student's Name
 - Student's Date of Birth
 - The statement, "[Student Name] has successfully completed [name of program or activity], a program of Yukon First Nation cultural, language, or traditional knowledge learning activities of [number of hours] hours at the Grade [grade level] and should be granted [number of credits] credits on their school transcript."
 - Name of Yukon First Nation government
 - Name of Yukon First Nation government official and signature
 - Date of signature
- The student or their parent/guardian will submit the notice of completion to the school where they are registered in order that the appropriate credits be added to their transcript.
 - Alternatively, with the student's permission, the Yukon First Nation may also provide a copy of the notice directly to the school where the student is registered in order that credit be added to the student's transcript.

GRANTING OF CREDITS

- Upon the school's receipt of a notice of completion, the credit code will be added to the student's official record.
- The "Transfer Standing" (TS) grade will be used on the student's transcript for these course codes to indicate successful completion.
- A copy of the notice of completion will be kept in the student's cumulative file.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to the Department of Education, School Councils, School Boards, and all members of the school community. It applies to both Yukon First Nations (YFN) and non-Yukon First Nations students in a Yukon secondary school, as well as students at least 14 years old in a homeschool program.

Students who are members of transboundary First Nations that assert claims in the Yukon and who are attending Yukon schools may receive credits for cultural, language, and traditional knowledge learning activities undertaken with their First Nation or communities, following the same process.

Questions or concerns regarding the interpretation or application of this policy should first be addressed to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Corporate Services and Programs.

At the request of the First Nation Education Commission (FNEC), the Assistant Deputy Minister of Student Learning and First Nations Initiatives (or designate) will review this policy in conjunction with partners.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In cases where individual circumstances make it impossible to apply the provisions of this policy, or where applying the policy would result in an unfair or unintended outcome, a decision may be made based on the individual merits and facts of the situation. Such decisions will apply only to the specific case and will not set a precedent.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY REFERENCES

[External credentials - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](http://gov.bc.ca)

[Joint Education Action Plan](#)

[Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly—2019](#)

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Actions](#), Call to Action 62

[United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), Article 14

[Yukon Education Act](#), Sections 4 (g), 43, 51, 55.