



ACAD 35:

Research and Institutional Development

Effective Date: Friday, April 17, 2026

** These are organizationally adapted standards from the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) and the Alaska Comprehensive Centre/Alaska Native Education*

Definitions

"Academic freedom"	generally, refers to the right to inquire about, investigate, pursue, teach and speak freely about academic issues without fear of impairment to their employment or contractual position or other reprisal post-secondary or other research partners of Shingwauk Kinooamaage Gamig will have specific institutional definitions and policies of academic freedom that will apply
"Academic research"	for the purpose of this policy statement, this refers to one form of research, and may be Indigenous or non-Indigenous led scholarly research that is published according to the standards of an academic journal; community-based research projects may be academic research once publishing criteria is met and results are published in an academic journal; academic research is equal in importance as that of community-based research projects
"Community-based research"	for the purpose of this policy statement, this refers to one form of research, and may be Indigenous or non-Indigenous led research, but is not published according to the standards of an academic journal; community-based research projects are equal in importance as that of academic research
"Epistemology"	can be thought of the study or explanation of how people think or know about their reality; it includes entire systems of thinking built upon specific

*	Ontologies; epistemology is tied to ontology, as what is believed to be real will impact the way a people think about that reality; epistemology and the context in which it used may refer to a Eurocentric definition as the theory of knowledge and pedagogy involving the processes by which people come to learn or know; or, it can be an Indigenous epistemology as found in theories, philosophies, histories, ceremonies, and stories as Indigenous ways of knowing; in demonstrating different epistemologies, what is presented as Indigenous knowledge and what is presented as scientific knowledge continue to be positioned as opposing and incongruent theories of knowledge
“Indigenization”	for purpose of this policy statement, this refers to stopping harmful practices that perpetuate the exclusion and misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in teaching and learning; it is in response to the reality that academic curricula have primarily been developed in ways that privilege a dominant, Euro-Western worldview and culture; indigenization does not require abandoning multiculturalism, as both can be practiced side-by-side; indigenization aims to benefit everyone for a richer understanding of the world through awareness of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives
“Indigenous academic freedom”	for the purposes of this policy statement, this refers to the right to inquire about, investigate, pursue, teach and speak freely about Indigenous or Anishinabek academic or worldview perspectives without fear of impairment to their position or other reprisal
“Indigenous worldview” *	Indigenous scholars generally describe an Indigenous worldview as one that provides the filter or the lens from which place-based epistemologies, methodologies, and pedagogies can be explained; although Indigenous peoples come from diverse cultural contexts, there is a common worldview, in the belief that humans are intricately connected to the natural world, and the interconnectedness and spirituality of all living things, relationality to one another and to the land
“Ontology” *	refers to the way a people view the nature of existence and reality; once a set of beliefs is established regarding ‘what is real’, research may then follow to discover more about the beliefs in this reality; (e.g. is there one ‘real world’? or, are there multiple worlds observed independently through the lens of each observer?); ontology is asking: <i>what is real?</i>
“Research”	for the purpose of this policy statement, research includes any work that raises and builds an increased level of consciousness and insight into our Indigenous and Anishinabek world, based on relational accountability
“Researchers”	refers to employees, students, or any other individuals (collectively, “researchers”) who are engaged in academic or community-based project research activities as part of Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig work, and under the direction and leadership, or co-direction and co-leadership, by and with Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig
“Worldview”	refers to a set of assumptions and beliefs that form the basis of a people’s

comprehension and understanding of the world;

**Definitions adapted from Indigenous scholar S. Wilson, 2008, Research is Ceremony*

Background

- A. Indigenous research is an important field of study for Indigenous Institutes to actively participate in advancing the wellbeing and place in the world of its member communities and/or members of Indigenous Nations. With the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's related call for the *indigenization* of higher education within academic institutions, Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars in their work are exploring both formal academic research and community-based research projects using methodologies centered from Indigenous worldviews, epistemologies, and ontology.

Purpose

- B. This policy statement affirms that academic and community-based research projects will be key academic pursuits of Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig as part of its Anishinabek Skills, Innovation and Research Centre; Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig is a recognized Indigenous Institute in the province of Ontario under the Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017. With a growing and outstanding presence and emergence of Indigenous and Anishinabek academic scholars advancing Indigenous and Anishinabek ways of knowing, seeing and doing, Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig seeks to collaborate and influence local, regional and national Indigenous/Anishinabek education policy development using Indigenous academic freedom and Indigenous research (see related Anishinabek Education Research Policy Statement).
- C. As institutional development advances and grows in research, Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig will create and approve additional research and program development policies supporting the advancement of Anishinabek curriculum, programs, and research activity. During this transition period, Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig Board of Directors will approve on a case-by-case basis any Anishinabek curriculum, programs, and research projects led by or co-led, by Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig and its partner(s).

Policy Statement

- D. This policy statement supports Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig's *Anishinabek Education Research Approach* and adopts institutionally defined perspectives on academic freedom and Indigenous academic freedom as part of advancing Indigenous/Anishinabek education in its community-based place of learning. This focus on Indigenous/Anishinabek education does not preclude participation in other research and/or other academic freedoms on related topics and subjects, as Indigenous epistemologies are wholistic and relationally based (e.g. research supporting inquiry into student success factors may include health and wellness research as influencers of academic and education success).
- E. Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig will participate in Indigenous academic research that advances critical inquiry, discussion and solution-based action to investigate and challenge teaching and learning institutional systems and practices, as well as support and advancing new teaching and learning institutional systems and practices, where Indigenous and Anishinabek people may find themselves in their realms of education and training work, communities, and the integrated world around them.
- F. This policy statement provides formalized support for Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig in Indigenous academic freedom in both academic and community-based research activities. Additional expected researcher responsibilities, such as those stated in the Tri Council Policy Statement in Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada will apply.
- G. Academic freedom and Indigenous academic freedom aim to make intellectual scholarship, discourse and critique possible without reprisal or repression. In exercising academic freedom and Indigenous academic freedom, researchers of Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig will be knowledgeable and also be considerate of other external research parameters, such as but not limited to, The Human Rights Code, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Tri Council Policy Statement (2018) Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada, and any other institutional policies, ethical review boards and oversight committees.
- H. Different institutional histories and mandates of Indigenous Institutes such as Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig, and that of Ontario's post-secondary institutions, suggests that indigenization and the related concept of academic freedom and Indigenous academic freedom, will have different contexts and approaches in its application.
- I. Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig will continue to partner with its valued post-secondary and other institutions as part of providing community-based access to post-secondary programs. Partner institutional policies on academic freedom as it relates to the delivery of community-based programs will be respected by Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig. In situation(s) where it may be viewed that misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples is within a partner's curriculum or content, Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig and its partner institution will mutually agree on a remedy or solution.

Policy Statement Evaluation Date - 10/31/2022

- J. This policy statement will be every two years as part of the Board of Director's policy review cycle and schedule. The evaluation date above represents the first date upon which this

policy statement is eligible for review.

Related Legislation, Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Documents	• Anishinabek Education Research Policy Statement • TCPS 2 (2018) – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada
Policies Superseded by this Policy	None

The official version of this policy statement is housed in the Office of the President. In case of discrepancy between an online version and the official version held, the official version shall prevail.

