Welcome to the School of Population and Public Health
Handbook for Graduate Aboriginal Students
This post gives the story of the origin of the Musqueam First Nation name: there was once a lake called xʷməm̓qʷe:m (Camosun Bog), where the sʔi:ɬqəy̓ (double-headed serpent) came from. Everything the serpent passed over died and from its droppings a new plant grew, the məθkʷəy̓. The people of long ago thus named that area xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam – place of the məθkʷəy̓). The post represents Musqueam ancestors and the Nation’s connection with them and the land, through their teachings. Click here to read more.

Contents page: Four Kwakwaka’wakw spirit masks belonging to the Atłak̓am dance and privilege, various carvers, Kwakwaka’wakw Nation.

From clockwise top left, these masks are: an Atłak̓am mask from Smith Inlet, the “Tree stump” mask, an Atłak̓am mask from Blunden Harbour, an Atłak̓am mask from Blunden Harbour, made by Chief George Walkus, Kwakwaka’wakw Nation, and an Atłak̓am mask without specific community information. These masks are housed in the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) in the Kwakwaka’wakw section of the Multiversity Galleries. Atłak̓am, or the Dance of the Forest Spirits, features 40 characters. The masks are meant to be used for four years and then burned. According to MOA, the dance continues to be practised by the Kwakwaka’wakw, with Hereditary Chief Robert Joseph describing the experience as: “The forest has many voices, and sometimes, there is deafening silence: such is the moment behind the dance curtain.” (“Behind the Mask” by Robert Joseph, in Down from the Shimmering Sky, edited by Peter Macnair, Robert Joseph, and Bruce Grenville. Published by Douglas & McIntyre and the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1998).

Page Three: SPPH alumni Johanna Sam, Tsilhqot’in Nation

Credit: Peter Holst

Page Four: The UBC Student Recreation Centre basketball courts

Page Six: The Longhouse

Credit: Don Erhardt

Page Seven: SPPH alumni Johanna Sam, Tsilhqot’in Nation

Credit: Johanna Sam

Page Eight: An event in Sty-Wet-Tan Great Hall

Credit: First Nations House of Learning

Page Eight: SPPH alumni Miranda Kelly, Soowahlie First Nation

Credit: Miranda Kelly

Glossary

This is a glossary of terms used throughout this Handbook, to clarify the use and intention of certain words.

Aboriginal - Belonging to one of the Indigenous peoples of Canada, comprised of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Indigenous - Belonging to one of the Indigenous peoples of Canada, comprised of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.
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Welcome and Acknowledgements

ʔa: siːˈʃəm siˈʃəʔ, ʔəmi ceːp ʔewəɬ ʔi ʔo to ʔə University of British Columbia kʷ s ʔām̓əts ʔi ʔə to ʔə šxʷməθkʷəy̓əmaʔɬ təməxʷ.

[Respected friends, Welcome to the University of British Columbia, which is situated within the Musqueam Traditional Territory.]

The School of Population and Public Health (SPPH) would like to acknowledge that we are situated upon the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. For this, we give many thanks.

Welcome to SPPH, which aims to create, share and apply knowledge through research to improve the health of the public around the world.

Attracting and training Aboriginal students is a top priority for SPPH. The first-hand knowledge and experience many Aboriginal students bring to our school helps us ensure that the health of Aboriginal communities is protected and improved, in Canada and globally.

This handbook aims to provide information on resources relevant to Aboriginal students in SPPH. We hope that provision of this information will help to make your experience at our school a fulfilling and enjoyable one.

At the end of this handbook you will find contact information for people who can answer your questions or help you become involved in both the Aboriginal and university communities.

SPPH faculty are happy to speak with students about possible practicum experiences, thesis topics and more which focus on Aboriginal peoples and health, and the staff at SPPH welcome any enquiries you may have.

We wish you all the best with your studies.

niʔ ceːp ʔo ʔaf wo ʔiyəs. [Wishing you success for your future.]

Academic Options at SPPH

One of the four divisions of the school is Health in Populations, which explores population health perspectives on improving the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples, as well as the determinants of population health. Those working within this division come from a range of disciplines and backgrounds.

Several SPPH courses will include content that examines the health of Canada’s Indigenous peoples. Some of these are:

SPPH 536: Aboriginal people and Public Health: Ethics, Policy and Practice - looks at the experience of colonization, the Indian Act, the impact of residential school and child welfare systems, and using traditional healing for early intervention. This course examines the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal people and non-Indigenous Canadians and provides students with a greater understanding of Aboriginal health.

SPPH 537: Perinatal Epidemiology - looks at the indicators of maternal and newborn well-being across population subgroups and transformational change in Indigenous health.

SPPH 550: Public Health Approaches to Substance Use and Addictions - looks at public health strategies for addictive behaviours, substance use and related problems with a multidisciplinary approach.
Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Health (CEIH)
The Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Health was established in 2014 and is housed within SPPH.

Working with Indigenous leaders throughout the country, the Centre aims to improve wellness and outcomes, and advance healthcare, for Aboriginal peoples.

The Centre offers several academic courses and programs with a focus on Indigenous health and well-being, including:

Certificate in Aboriginal Health and Community Administration
An 11-month program including five residency weekends at the University, online assignments, and discussions with students’ home communities. The program aims to give students the knowledge to help with their communities’ healthcare administration needs.

UBC Learning Circle
One of the non-credit programs that the CEIH is responsible for is the UBC Learning Circle, which involves weekly videoconferencing and webinar events sharing successful health practices and interventions, as well as expert speakers and researchers, with healthcare workers in First Nations communities.

Indigenous Speaker Series
This speaker series focuses on research that looks at Indigenous health and well-being. Click here for more information.

Volunteering
Students looking to help out within the Centre can volunteer in various ways, including helping out with the Summer Science Program, a one-week cultural and science program for Aboriginal students in grades nine to twelve. Those interested can contact the Centre.

Master of Public Health practicum
A number of Master of Public Health students have completed their practicum in areas relevant to the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples:

- Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw Nations - click here to read more.
- Health Protection, First Nations Inuit Health, BC Region
- Inuvik Interagency Committee, Public Health Agency of Canada
- Healthy Foods North Project, Inuvik, Public Health Agency of Canada

MSc and PhD thesis topics
Students pursuing a Master of Science or Doctor of Philosophy at SPPH are required to complete a thesis, and some students use this as an opportunity to focus on Indigenous health issues.

Examples of thesis topics include:


Looking to connect with other Aboriginal students while getting some exercise?

Why not join the Longhouse basketball or soccer teams, or better yet, start a team yourself?

Community lunches are also available every Tuesday at Sty-Wet-Tan Great Hall in the Longhouse - see page seven for more details.
Dr. Patricia Spittal, CEIH interim associate director - research; SPPH Health in Populations division head; Cedar Project principal investigator.
Research interests: HIV-related vulnerabilities of marginalized communities; Building the Health in Populations Division.

Dr. Martin Schechter, SPPH Professor; CEIH co-director.
Research interests: HIV/AIDS and urban population health; Clinical epidemiology/clinical trials; Addictions.

Dr. Eugenia Oviedo-Joekes, SPPH Associate Professor; Cedar Project co-investigator.
Research interests: Addictions; Public health and addictions; Testing alternative approaches to expand and diversify treatments for vulnerable populations.

Dr. Patricia Janssen, SPPH Professor; Women's Health Study Team.
Research interests: Maternal/Fetal/Newborn Health; Women's health; Population health; Clinical epidemiology/clinical trials; Marginalized women in the North.

Dr. Jerry Spiegel, SPPH Professor.
Research interest: Food security in Northwest Territories; Effects of globalization on health; Ecosystem approaches to human health; Understanding and addressing influences of physical and social environments on health; Global health and human security; The economic evaluation of interventions.

If you have any questions about awards, finances, housing issues, or if you're not sure who to ask, you can email, or drop by the office of, Savanah Knockwood, Indigenous Student Programs Coordinator.

Interdisciplinary studies
The Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program allows graduate students to undertake interdisciplinary research which is not provided for in departmental programs. SPPH can serve as the home department for students undertaking this program. The Program requires two faculty members to act as co-supervisors for the student’s proposed research topic and study plan, and is appropriate for highly motivated students only, who have demonstrated a command of two or more subjects with first class standing. Click here to read more about this Program.

Admissions Policy
UBC does not have a specific Aboriginal graduate admissions policy. However, many graduate programs take into consideration the full range of academic, cultural, personal and professional knowledge that Aboriginal applicants bring to their preparation for graduate study. If you are unsure whether you meet minimum admission requirements, please contact the Aboriginal Coordinator in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Jenny Phelps. You can click here to read more.

The CEIH also maintains a guide for Aboriginal students interested in UBC Health Programs.

Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries

UBC Aboriginal Awards (common application)

Gladys C. Crawford First Nations Bursary
Bursaries totalling $10,400 have been endowed for First Nations Students in any year or faculty.
Application Deadline: September

Gwyn and Aileen Gunn Bursary for First Nations Students
Bursaries are available from a pool of $19,300 for First Nations students in need of financial assistance.
Application Deadline: September

Squamish Nation Award
This award is available to a Squamish Nation student in any program or year of study who has demonstrated University or Squamish community activity.
Application Deadline: September
Click here to read about further awards and here for eligibility requirements.

Other UBC Awards

CEIH Awards
CEIH has a variety of awards available to graduate students including:
- Lindsay and Elizabeth Gordon Award in Health Sciences
- First Nations Health Sciences Scholarship
- Harold F. and Anne Bedner Uphill Scholarship in Health Sciences

Aboriginal Graduate Fellowship Scholarships
All Aboriginal students are eligible but priority is given to those whose traditional territory falls, at least in part, within Canada. Close to $500,000 is available as part of these Fellowships.
Application Deadline: Mid to late January

UBC Bursary Program
Students with student loans who have unmet financial need are eligible. Students with Band Sponsorship are able to apply for student loans. If Student Aid BC, or another provincial student loan provider, assesses unmet need, then the student will be eligible for UBC bursaries.
Application Deadline: September 15 (Winter) and June 1 (Summer)

CIHR-CGSM Awards
Canadian citizens or permanent residents who are undertaking a research project.
Application Deadline: September to December
Scholarships, Awards and Bursaries

External Awards

The Irving K. Barber B.C. Aboriginal Student Award
Awards of $1,000 to $5,000 are available to Aboriginal students undertaking post-secondary education at B.C. public post-secondary institutions.

Application Deadline: March

New Relationship Trust Foundation Scholarship Awards
First Nations students from British Columbia who are attending an accredited post-secondary institution on a full-time basis are eligible. A maximum of two years of funding at Masters, and two at Doctorate, level are available.

Application Deadline: June

First Citizens Fund Student Bursary Program
Post-secondary Aboriginal students with a financial need who are permanent residents in B.C. for at least six months at the time of application, and registered full-time in a two-year minimum academic program at a B.C. institution are eligible for this funding.

Application Deadline: Varying deadlines

Indspire Health Careers Award
Aboriginal students studying in healthcare careers enrolled in programs of at least two academic years at a post-secondary Canadian institution are eligible.

Application Deadline: August 1, November 1, February 1

Click here to search for Aboriginal Bursaries through the Government of Canada tool.

Financial Support

There are a number of financial support resources available to all UBC students, including enrolment services professionals on campus, who can advise graduate students that contact them, and the First Nations House of Learning, which offers a financial planning worksheet.

For Aboriginal students specifically, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies offers information about how to fund your graduate education here.

Band Sponsorship and Third-party Billing
Band Sponsorship or Sponsorship/Third-party billing is when a part of a UBC student’s fees are paid by the student’s First Nation, and it depends on the First Nation as to what kind of costs can be covered. Enrolment Services will bill your First Nation directly for your tuition and fees, rather than billing you.

There can be various restrictions on Band Sponsorship; for instance, if you receive funding for on-campus housing, you should ask your First Nation if you can still be funded when living off-campus. You can read more about this here and email ubc.sponsorship@ubc.ca for more information or help.

If your First Nation is sponsoring you, there are specific deadlines you must adhere to, including deadlines for the submission of documents. Click here to read more about this.

Students being sponsored by their First Nation may still be eligible for student loan funding, and it is free to apply. Click here to read more.

Awards and Scholarships

By self-identifying as an Aboriginal student in your admission application, you will be automatically eligible for some funding opportunities. You can also self-identify through the Student Service Center under ‘Personal Information’. There are a number of awards available to Aboriginal students at UBC, for which there are various requirements that you can view here. See the internal and external Scholarships, Awards, and Bursaries information on the previous pages for some of the available opportunities.
Resources on Campus

There are many resources available to Aboriginal students on campus at UBC Vancouver, from help with your studies to a dedicated library. If you are having any issues or just have some questions, do not hesitate to reach out to any of the resources listed below, or those listed in the Contact Us section of this handbook.

UBC Aboriginal Portal

The UBC Aboriginal Portal will be your first place to visit online. It contains a wealth of useful information, including available academic programs, admissions assistance, financial guides, and useful contacts. The Portal also features an events calendar, news and articles about Aboriginal students and graduates and information about Aboriginal research at UBC.

The First Nations Longhouse

The First Nations Longhouse is the place to go for the Aboriginal student community. It opened in 1993 and offers events, educational programming, study and social spaces, as well as counselling, tutoring and more.

Students can use one of 12 work stations in the computer centre, consisting of both PCs and Macs, which are loaded with the Microsoft Office and Adobe suites. Printing services are also available.

Rest and study spaces are available at the Longhouse, as are food preparation areas, including microwaves and refrigeration. Lockers are available, with registration required. Men and women’s change rooms including showers are also available to students.

You can follow the Longhouse on Twitter and Facebook.

Housed next to the Longhouse is the Xwi7xwa Library, the only dedicated Indigenous university library in Canada, housing special collections and expert help for Indigenous research, with 12,000 items currently, including 6,000 books and 450 videos.

The First Nations House of Learning (FNHL)

The First Nations House of Learning, situated within the Longhouse, endeavors to improve UBC’s ability to meet the needs of Aboriginal students, and to make the University’s resources more accessible to them, by organizing student services, strategic planning, and communications.

Some of the services it provides include:

- Tutors: Tutors helping with general writing, maths, biology, chemistry and physics education are available from September to April via a scheduled drop-in service.

- Counsellors: Counsellors are available at the Longhouse on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, throughout the year. Students can make appointments through Counselling Services. Please see Counselling for more.

- Sweat lodges: A sweat lodge community exists in the Longhouse, and two traditional sweat lodges, one for men and one for women, are housed there, with sweats scheduled monthly. For more information, contact the First Nations House of Learning.

Award-Winning Research

Doctoral student Johanna Sam is a proud member of the Tsilhqot’in Nation, who has been awarded several doctoral fellowships, including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council’s (SSHRC) Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Doctoral Scholarship for her high standard of scholarly achievement in the health sciences, as well as UBC’s Aboriginal PhD Fellowship.

Johanna’s Master’s thesis looked into mental health in high-school students, and she is now a PhD student in Human Development, Learning, and Culture with UBC’s Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, Special Education. Her research looks into how young people’s social and emotional development is shaped by online interactions, particularly cyberbullying.

“SPPH allowed me to focus on creating innovative approaches for the delivery of youth mental health services in communities.”

Johanna says there were many opportunities outside of the seminars and Grand Rounds at SPPH to get involved with the University, including volunteering as a student rep.

“During my MSc, I was able to pursue my passion of making a difference in the lives of young people, especially in Aboriginal communities.”

The MSc program at SPPH attracted Johanna because of its focus on developing a fact-based understanding of the social determinants of mental health and well-being.
Community lunches: Every Tuesday from September to April, a different faculty, school or unit hosts a lunch to provide Aboriginal students with information about the opportunities and services each entity provides. Past hosts have included the Child and Family Research Institute and the Museum of Anthropology. The lunches are held in Sty-Wet-Tan Great Hall at the First Nations Longhouse, and start with a welcome from Resident Elder, Larry Grant, from the Musqueam First Nation.

Science Academic Support
Aboriginal Science Coordinator Joel Liman can provide academic advice and organize free science and maths tutoring for Indigenous students. You can email for more information.

Health, Wealth, and Well-being
The University offers a wide range of student services to ensure your well-being. If you are having any difficulties or need help, don’t hesitate to reach out for help from one of the contacts on the Contact Us page.

Housing
Newly-admitted Aboriginal graduate students have priority when it comes to on-campus housing, including both single students and students with families. There are various eligibility criteria, including minimum age requirements (usually 19 years old) and academic load, and application deadlines apply. You will need to self-identify as an Aboriginal student on both your admission and housing applications.

For any questions about housing, you can email information@housing.ubc.ca.

Counselling
Counselling Services on campus offers free counselling for students. It recognizes Aboriginal history, culture, traditional values and healing practices that support counselling, alongside the use of Western approaches. Individual counselling is available to Aboriginal students at any Counselling Services location, including at the First Nations House of Learning. Contact Counselling Services first to request counselling at the Longhouse.

Pride Collective
The Pride Collective provides information and support for people identifying as two-spirit, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender, as well as education to the wider UBC community, and hosts social events such as Outweek in February, and weekly discussion groups. Students are welcome to hang out in the Collective’s lounge at NEST 2103, which is open weekdays for study and socializing.

Work Learn Program
The Centre for Student Involvement and Careers offers a wide array of career-oriented resources for students, including mentorship, internship programs, careers advice, and the Work Learn Program, which supports work experiences at UBC. While working at UBC in one of these positions, you will also gain an opportunity to develop your professional skills, make contacts and gain mentoring.

Certain Work Learn positions have a preference for Aboriginal students, such as those from the Department of First Nations and Indigenous Studies, or the Xwi7xwa Library. You can also create your own Work Learn opportunity by contacting faculty or staff and discussing this.

Student Life and Events
Student life at UBC is filled with events and associations you can join.

First Nations Studies Student Association
This student-run club is open to any student on campus interested in Indigenous issues and topics. The group manages a blog and organizes events, including UBC’s first Powwow celebration, Nehiyo-Paskwa-Itsimowin. Follow them on Facebook and send the group an email to learn more.

Indigenous Students Association
Open to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, the Indigenous Students Association encourages members to learn about Indigenous cultural practices while building a community through social events. Follow them on Facebook and send the group an email to learn more.
Indigenous Health Leadership

Master of Public Health alumni Miranda Kelly of the Soowahlie First Nation was a regional advisor on the Fraser Salish team.

This unit serves 32 First Nations communities in the region, where Miranda helps with the regional governance structure, ensuring First Nations peoples can engage in health planning and decision making, as well as planning and implementation in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority.

Miranda says it is critically important for Indigenous students to be public health leaders, as Indigenous healthcare professionals are underrepresented in the system.

“I believe that Indigenous issues require Indigenous solutions, and that by fostering leadership of Indigenous peoples, we can shift the power imbalance in the health system that silences Indigenous voices.”

She says she felt well-supported by both SPPH faculty and her peers in the MPH program during her time at the University, and found the different perspectives of fellow students that were shared during course discussions of great benefit.

Miranda says she made lifelong friendships in the Master of Public Health program. Her most interesting work story was when she witnessed the signing in Squamish territory of the agreement that established the First Nations Health Authority.

Click here to read more.

Aboriginal Health Initiative

This student organization aims to increase awareness about Aboriginal health issues among those who will practice health in the future. You can follow the group on Facebook, Twitter or email the group at Aboriginal.Health.Initiative@gmail.com.

The Longhouse Sport and Social Club

The Longhouse Sport and Social Club was formed in 2011 to provide a place for Aboriginal students and friends to meet and connect through sports and other social activities. Basketball and soccer co-ed teams are available through UBC Rec, sponsored by the First Nations House of Learning, and students can also start their own teams through the Longhouse. Contact the Longhouse for more information on how to join these teams.

SAGE

Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE) is an educational support and mentoring program for Aboriginal graduate students. Its activities include establishing mentorships across the province and creating networking opportunities.

Events

There are a number of events celebrating Indigenous culture held at the University. The Aboriginal Portal has an events calendar, as does the First Nations and Indigenous Studies department of the Faculty of Arts.

The Longhouse hosts an annual graduation celebration in May, with keynote speakers and a lunch. You can read more about last year’s celebration here.

Careers and Alumni

SPPH Indigenous graduates have gone on to careers at organizations such as the First Nations Health Authority, the Provincial Health Services Authority, UBC, the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, and the BC Patient Safety and Quality Council.

Indigenous alumni have gone on to work as provincial leads, regional advisors, doctoral research assistants, managers of chief executive officer’s offices, outbreak coordinators and communications specialists.

Many Master of Public Health students have found that networking from their practicums can provide pathways to employment, including Justin Sorge of the Gitwangak Nation, whose contacts at the BCCDC led to a job as outbreak coordinator.

Justin was also awarded an Aboriginal Graduate Fellowship, which helped bolster his resume, and allowed him to concentrate on his studies. His advice for current Indigenous students is to apply for the Fellowship and other such opportunities.

Click here to read an interview with Justin.

See page seven and nine for interviews with SPPH Indigenous alumni Johanna Sam and Miranda Kelly.
Contact Us
Here are some useful contacts for your time at SPPH and UBC. Please feel free to approach them for any questions you may have.

**School of Population and Public Health Contacts**

Savanah Knockwood  
**Indigenous Student Programs Coordinator**  
Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Health, Room 285  
Tel: 604.827.4000  
Email: savanah.knockwood@ubc.ca

Dr. Chris Richardson  
**Associate Professor; Aboriginal Student Advisor**  
Tel: 604.827.4023  
Email: chris.richardson@ubc.ca

Dr. Patricia Spittal  
**Professor; Division Head, Health in Populations; CEIH interim Associate Director - Research;**  
Tel: 604.806.8779  
Email: spittal@sm.hivnet.ubc.ca

Simon Lam  
**Academic Programs Manager, MPH, MHSc**  
Tel: 604.822.9207  
Email: simon.lam@ubc.ca

Emily Van Gulik  
**Academic Programs Manager, MSc, PhD, MHA**  
Tel: 604.822.5405  
Email: emily.vangulik@ubc.ca

Megan Wurster  
**Program Coordinator, MSc OEH**  
Tel: 604.822.2827  
Email: spph.msc-oeh@ubc.ca

**UBC Contacts**

Aboriginal Student and Community Development Officer  
The First Nations House of Learning  
Tel: 604.822.8941  
Email: fnhl.coordinator@ubc.ca

Dr. Brianne Howard  
**Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Aboriginal Coordinator**  
Tel: 604.822.6965  
Email: brianne.howard@ubc.ca

Joanna Ludlow  
**Enrolment Services Professional**  
Enrolment Services  
Tel: 604.827.0141  
Email: joanna.ludlow@ubc.ca