

***Adidik goutc  
ke iji kabwin  
akikak  
i kitabinin***

**No matter where you are,  
you're on the territory.**

Reference guide  
to UQAT's territorial  
recognition principle

February 2024

**UQAT**  
UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC  
EN ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE

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# Background of UQAT's territorial recognition project

**Since its creation, the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) has been rooted in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region.**

A brief look at the institution's history quickly reveals the importance given to this vast area. UQAT is the first university in Quebec to identify with a region, not just a city. This is evident on the ground, as UQAT's centers and campuses are spread out over several towns in the region, and also venture into neighboring regions. This wide-ranging presence enables UQAT to respond appropriately to the needs of the communities it serves.



## Since UQAT was founded in 1983, sustained relations have been forged with First Peoples.

There are many examples of collaboration with First Nations and Inuit people: development of training programs, creation of the First Peoples Service, hosting of symposia on Indigenous realities, establishment of advisory and co-management committees between Indigenous partners and UQAT, creation of provincially recognized training programs, construction of the First Peoples Pavilion on the Val-d'Or campus, not to mention the many research projects involving Indigenous people. In short, UQAT and the Indigenous nations have built a trust-based relationship over many decades.

Thanks to ongoing collaboration with Indigenous peoples, UQAT is now able to implement a unique and authentic territorial recognition principle. For UQAT, territorial recognition is a principle of reciprocity and respect for the First Peoples who have inhabited the territory for millennia. It also represents UQAT's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

This further step in the trust-based and reciprocal relationship between UQAT and the First Peoples must be seen not as an end in itself, but rather as a further step along the path of respect that UQAT wishes to instill in this precious relationship marked by solidarity and mutual enrichment. It is for this reason that UQAT sees the principle of territorial recognition as a dynamic, evolving process, just as human relationships are.

To achieve this goal, it will be important to validate the Territorial Recognition Statement at regular intervals, and to transform it into concrete actions developed by the Territorial Recognition Committee. This validation will give UQAT the opportunity to further nurture its relationship with First Peoples over time, and to ensure that the means deployed continue to meet the needs of the region's Indigenous peoples.

# Territorial recognition supported by the University's action plans

**In developing its Action Plan 2019-2024 UQAT and Indigenous People, as well as its Strategic Plan 2020-2025, UQAT has acquired important levers that enable it to move forward on priority issues in the Indigenous milieu, such as territorial recognition.**

The overall objective of the UQAT and Indigenous Peoples 2019-2024 Action Plan, launched in 2019, is to strengthen UQAT's commitment to Indigenous peoples and to co-construct an educational environment that promotes cultural safety and the decolonization of knowledge.

This action plan includes four strategic orientations:

- 1 Contribute to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' skills development;
- 2 Enhance the student experience for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students;
- 3 Contribute, through research and creation, to the well-being of Indigenous peoples;
- 4 Contribute to the improvement of relations between communities.

Based on this action plan, the 2020-2025 institutional development plan clearly demonstrates UQAT's clear stance on Indigenous peoples, with its fourth orientation, i.e. shaping the future together with First Peoples.

The territorial recognition process put forward by UQAT reflects these two action plans.

# A sincere co-construction process

## The Mamawi Mikimodan Service (working together) coordinated the territorial recognition project.

Embodied by experienced staff members, this new service, which reports to the Vice-Rectorate for Reconciliation, International Development and Partnerships (VRRIP), offers support for reconciliation through education and dialogue, and works closely with First Peoples to embody a joint and authentic process for territorial recognition.

A joint ad hoc committee was set up. Its mandate was to reflect on the notion of territorial recognition and to develop a statement of territorial recognition, as well as concrete actions to anchor it within UQAT.

To carry out its mandate, the committee worked according to the following principles of action:

- Respect for people, their points of view and different types of knowledge, for fruitful collaboration and co-development of knowledge;
- Reciprocity of transmitted knowledge so that exchanges are made in a spirit of give and take;
- Empathy between committee members, in the consideration of recommendations and advice given.

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Based on three criteria of representativeness - knowledge and experience related to the territory and territorial recognition, diversity of representation of the First Peoples who attend and are part of UQAT, and availability and interest in contributing to the mandate - the committee was made up of 15 people. People with different and valuable backgrounds, from both the university community and various Indigenous nations, such as Anicinape, Atikamekw, Cree and Innu, took part in this wide-ranging project.

The committee brought together Indigenous and non-Indigenous key players from diverse backgrounds, with unique knowledge and experience of the territory, Indigenous people, education, cultures, languages and more.

## The Territorial Recognition Committee was made up of:

- > **Tom Mapachee, Anicinape Elder, Pikogan**  
An Anicinape elder, Tom has been involved in education for many years and promotes the Anicinape language.
- > **Isabelle Mapachee, Anicinapekwe, Pikogan**  
A pow-wow dancer and cultural ambassador, Isabelle is also dedicated to the well-being of her community members.
- > **Nadine Gaudaur, Anicinapekwe, Timiskaming First Nation**  
Nadine works for the Red Cross and regularly travels to Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario.
- > **Allan McLaren, Anicinape, Timiskaming First Nation**  
Passionate about music, Allan has worked for his community of Timiskaming First Nation as an education support services administrator.
- > **Kigos (Kevin) Papatie, Anicinape, Kitcisakik**  
As a filmmaker, Kigos brings Anicinape territory to the screen and is actively involved in the Minwashin organization.
- > **Sipi Flamand, Atikamekw Nehirowisiw, graduate student, UQAT**  
Sipi is Chief of the Manawan community and author of a book on the self-determination of Indigenous peoples. He is also studying Indigenous legal systems as part of his master's degree.
- > **Bérénice Mollen-Dupuis, Innu, Continuing Education Service, UQAT**  
Bérénice is as deft a beader as she is an advocate for Indigenous issues. She is a business development advisor for Indigenous issues with the Continuing Education Service.
- > **Philippe Nadon, postgraduate student, UQAT**  
As part of his doctoral studies, Philippe is interested in indigenous governance, urban indigenism and indigenous political participation. His thesis focuses on the expression of the right to Indigenous self-government in urban Quebec.
- > **Véronique Paul, Indigenous Education Research, Training and Development Unit (URFDEMA), UQAT**  
Véronique is a regular professor of education and a member of URFDEMA. With two Inuit collaborators, she has written a book on the Inuit movement to take local control of schooling
- > **Sébastien Brodeur-Girard, École d'études autochtones, UQAT**  
Professeur à l'École d'études autochtones, Sébastien s'intéresse particulièrement à l'histoire et aux droits des peuples autochtones.



> **Éric Rosa, Research Institute of Mines and Environment (RIME), UQAT**

Éric is a professor at RIME and a member of the Groupe de recherche sur l'eau souterraine (GRES) (Underground water research group). His work involves groundwater issues with the Cree Nation.

> **Linh Tran, Vice-Rector for Reconciliation, International Development and Partnerships (VRRIP), UQAT**

Linh is Vice-Rector. The Vice-Rectorate focuses on Indigenous university issues relating to decolonization, indigenization and reconciliation.

> **Janet Mark, Eeyou, Mamawi Mikimodan Service, UQAT**

Janet is a strategic advisor for Indigenous reconciliation and education. Over the years, through her work and involvement, she has contributed to the development of a wide range of services for the Indigenous population.

> **Frédérique Cornellier, Mamawi Mikimodan Service, UQAT**

Frédérique is an Indigenous project development consultant. Her entire professional career is rooted in a desire for social justice and self-determination for First Peoples.

> **Chantal Gervais, Val-d'Or campus, UQAT**

Chantal is an executive secretary with a keen interest in Indigenous issues.

# Process chronology

**Throughout the committee's work, the anicinape word *pekatc* punctuated our reflections and decisions.**

This term, which means «to take your time», enabled us to respect the pace and commitment of each and every one of us, while reflecting the desire expressed by Indigenous people to do things carefully, without rushing. In the words of Tom Mapachee, *pekatc* allows us to get to know and understand the Anicinape people.

As presented below, the Territorial Recognition Committee's work and reflections were spread over several months. This approach - taking the time to proceed at an appropriate pace - enabled the committee members to make gradual progress and improve their deliberations.

## Winter 2022

Setting up the committee and initiating discussions

## Spring - summer 2022

Meetings with invited guests, exchanges, research and documentation related to territorial recognition

## Summer 2022

Drafting of the statement by the drafting sub-committee

## Fall 2022

Validation of the principle by the committee and start of internal consultations at UQAT

## Winter 2023

Adoption of the principle by the UQAT Board of Directors

## Summer 2023

Launching of the territorial recognition principle

## **A series of meetings from January to December 2022 was proposed to members. Meetings for the first five months were more intensive, with members meeting once a month from January to May.**

The first meeting enabled the committee members to familiarize themselves with UQAT's mission and vision, and to learn more about the various territorial recognition statements elsewhere in Canada, thanks to a presentation by Sébastien Brodeur-Girard. Most importantly, each member was able to name what the process meant to them personally.

The next three meetings were devoted to listening to various people invited for their expertise, so that they could share their views on territorial recognition. Members had the opportunity to meet Alexis Wawanoloath, Richard Kistabish, Maurice J. Kistabish, Pauline Lameboy, Pierre Corbeil, Éric Cardinal and Carole Lévesque. In addition, they viewed video vignettes by MéliSSa Mollen-Dupuis presented on Espaces Autochtones.

Members also read texts by Indigenous authors and a report on a presentation by Geneviève Paquette, Director of the Montreal Canadiens Children's Foundation, on the subject of territorial recognition. In addition to these guests, several Indigenous people were approached to take part in the listening and sharing process set up to feed the committee.

Unfortunately, they were already very busy, and were unable to participate for a number of reasons. This observation made us all the more aware of the over-solicitation of individuals in Indigenous communities.

Between meetings, readings and viewings were circulated to the whole group, inviting committee members to pursue their reflections. Also, in order to preserve the ideas proposed throughout the process, a compilation was made after each meeting. A summary was drawn up from these keywords and proposed ideas, and presented to the members at the brainstorming day.

The fifth meeting took place in Val-d'Or. The brainstorming day provided an opportunity to take stock of the progress made by the committee and the comments made by invited guests. Three Anicinape Elders, Alice Jérôme from Pikogan and Bernadette Cooper and Gilles Wabanonik from Lac-Simon, honoured the committee with their participation. Their rich words, exchanged during the morning Talking Circle, guided the members throughout the day. In the afternoon, the rector joined the group for the brainstorming workshops, which brought the members together in small teams to specify the concrete actions and terms to be prioritized for the drafting of the territorial recognition statement. From this day rich in exchanges and learning, the words sincerity, authenticity and heart strongly emerged. These words inspired the rest of the committee's work.

Following the brainstorming session, a drafting sub-committee was set up. Over the summer, this sub-committee developed a territorial recognition statement and identified concrete actions to inspire members of the academic community to move forward with the principle of territorial recognition.

In early September, the committee met again to validate the statement and the concrete actions developed over the summer.

This meeting allowed the committee to clarify the drafting process, clarify certain terms used and improve the statement to accurately reflect the members' deliberations. The internal consultation process with the UQAT community, which ran throughout the fall, really took off following this sixth meeting of the committee.

In mid-December, at the end of the internal consultation process, the committee members met to take stock of the discussions and questions raised during the consultation sessions. As certain terms raised many questions, it was necessary to clarify or modify them, which was done by the committee. This last meeting of 2022 enabled us to draw up the final version of the territorial recognition statement and the concrete actions.

In short, throughout the process, inspiring people generously gave of their time and shared their thoughts. We'd like to extend our warmest thanks to them; without them, the process would not have had the same depth and authenticity. A huge *MIGWETC* to each and every one of you!

During the fall of 2022, the Mamawi Mikimodan Service led a process of internal consultations within UQAT to raise awareness and familiarize the university community with territorial recognition. The consultations were also designed to give people the opportunity to ask questions, make suggestions and exchange views on the subject.

Three meetings were held in November 2022: one online meeting, one face-to-face meeting at the Val-d'Or campus, and one face-to-face meeting at the Rouyn-Noranda campus.

### **In addition, various UQAT bodies were informed and consulted at the same time:**

- Board of Directors (twice)
- Strategic Steering Committee
- School of Indigenous Studies
- Executive Committee
- URFDEMA
- Academic Council

In addition, it was essential to consult UQAT's Indigenous students. Although these students had the opportunity to participate in one of the meetings proposed in November, the committee sent them an e-mail including an explanatory video that presented the entire process, as well as the statement and the concrete actions. Those who wished could then contact the Mamawi Mikimodan Service to exchange ideas, answer questions or provide clarifications.

# The course of our reflections

The year 2022 was marked by discussions, meetings and readings on the subject of territorial recognition.

All of this enhanced the whole process. Significant avenues and keywords have emerged from our reflections, enabling us to better grasp the subtleties of this principle of reconciliation in the educational context, and even to go beyond it.

## Three keywords central to our reflections

### Respect

Respect is a life skill that is essential to our relationships. The principle of territorial recognition, through its wording and actions, needs to be put forward with respect for First Peoples, thus creating a healthy environment conducive to exchanges and encounters. It is through a respectful attitude that we will be able to move forward on the path to reconciliation.

### Acknowledgement

It is essential to respectfully acknowledge the inexhaustible heritage that abounds within Indigenous cultures. It's important to highlight the contribution of First Peoples, in terms of knowledge, culture, language, history, presence, ethics, legal systems and so on. This acknowledgement gives Indigenous peoples the visibility and value they deserve.

### Heritage

Heritage refers to the transmission of knowledge, skills and traditions from generation to generation. Ancestors are honoured for the rich heritage they have handed down over the millennia.

# The heart at the center of the process

## Believing

Adhering to the principle of territorial recognition means believing in it.

## Sincerity

So going ahead with the statement demonstrates the sincerity of the process.

# The drafting of the statement

## Importance of the words

As the importance of patience and time in the Territorial Recognition Committee's reflection process demonstrates, each word was carefully chosen to ensure the accuracy and truth of the statement.

## Avoiding repetitions

Repetition doesn't make the statement more alive or present. It's important to choose the right moments to pronounce or write it. As the Quebec expression goes, «Trop, c'est comme pas assez» («Too much is like not enough»).

## Making it visible

Indigenous peoples are still relatively invisible in Quebec and Canadian society. We need to change this reality and acknowledge their age-old presence.

## New formula

The statement's formula differs from that of other post-secondary institutions in Quebec. The reason for this is simple: members of the Territorial Recognition Committee, invited guests and elders involved pooled their thoughts, which came from the heart. This statement is intended to bring it all into focus.

# Projecting ourselves forward through territorial recognition

## Commitment

By adopting the principle of territorial recognition, UQAT is clearly stating that it is ready to fully acknowledge the contribution of Indigenous peoples to society, and more specifically to the world of education. What's more, in support of this principle, the University is determined to take concrete actions.

## Dialogue

The statement and the actions that support it open the door to otherness. It is a call for sincere dialogue to bring people together.

## Important leverage

For the University, territorial recognition is a strong foundation on which to consolidate its position on the path to reconciliation. This commitment will also support the initiatives and concrete actions that will be deployed over the coming years.

## Awareness development

The entire approach, the statement and the concrete actions will serve as a means of raising awareness in order to make Indigenous peoples visible, reduce ignorance about them and support them in their affirmation.

## Going further

One major aspect was mentioned at the very first meeting of the territorial recognition committee, namely the importance of linking concrete actions to the statement in order to make it participative and dynamic. According to the members, without concrete action, territorial recognition loses its meaning and value. Thus, the adoption of the principle of territorial recognition represents the first step, which must be followed by several steps on the path to reconciliation through the implementation of concrete actions that recognize the place of First Peoples within the University.



## Education

Education is an important means of reducing the education gap between Indigenous peoples and the Quebec population. As Murray Sinclair, Ojibwe judge and commissioner for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, puts it so well, «It is precisely because education is the primary tool for the oppression of Indigenous peoples and the miseducation of all Canadians that we have concluded that education is the key to reconciliation».

The committee felt it was necessary to develop 5 success factors when UQAT adopted the territorial recognition principle, in order to ensure that concrete actions are taken:

1. Have budgets that are consistent with the implementation of concrete actions;
2. Have a person or a service dedicated to ensuring the follow-up of territorial recognition (Mamawi Mikimodan Service);
3. Set a 3-5 year timeframe before renewing the statement;
4. Ensure a public follow-up of the concrete actions;
5. Make presentations of the reference guide to the university community (raising awareness among UQAT staff).

# The Anicinapek history

**The Anicinapek, like several other Indigenous nations on Turtle Island (North America), describe their presence on their territory as dating from «time immemorial».**

Richard Kistabish explains that the Indigenous people are not referring to a Western, linear timeline, but to events that demonstrate their presence immediately after the end of the last ice age. It's important to take into account the oral traditions of these communities, which bear witness to a local presence dating back thousands of years. For example, the Abitibiwinnik refer to themselves as the people of Lake Abitibi, meaning «where the waters part», while Lake Témiscamingue, to which the members of the Timiskaming First Nation identify themselves, means «deep water». The extensive and precise place names of the Anicinapek family bear witness to a deep knowledge of the territory acquired over several generations.

The territory occupied by the Anicinapek is immense. This large nation is part of the Algonquian cultural and linguistic family.



The Anicinapek were also part of a vast trading network between several nations. In particular, they traded with the Eeyouch (Cree), located further north.

The Anicinapek developed several hunting, trapping and fishing technologies to feed and clothe themselves. Each Anicinape band moved methodically through its territory over the course of six seasons<sup>1</sup>. Winter was spent in small family groups on a specific part of the territory, the boundaries of which were known to the other families. During the summer, people gathered at specific locations for summer gatherings, where weddings, ceremonies and diplomatic relations were held. Later, these gathering places coincided with the activities of fur-trading posts and Christian missions.

<sup>1</sup>In the anicinape culture, there are six seasons in a year: pipon (winter), sigon (pre-spring), minokamin (spring), nipin (summer), takwagin (fall) and pitci pipon (pre-winter).

The arrival of priests in Anicinape territory, staying for extended periods during the summer, was intended to replace traditional practices and beliefs, while performing religious celebrations such as weddings and baptisms. The beginnings of colonization in Abitibi and Témiscamingue, and the mining and logging operations that accompanied it, affected the Anicinape people's ability to occupy their territory as they had always done. Moreover, the ancestral territory was divided by the creation of the provincial border between Quebec and Ontario.

The permanent arrival of non-Indigenous settlers was encouraged by government colonization plans that facilitated the acquisition of private lots, while Indigenous people were pushed out and sometimes even criminalized. Still, the Anicinapek participated in Quebec's economic development, working as salaried employees in road, rail and forestry construction. They also traded wild meat for tea and flour with early settlers. In those days, charges of alcohol use or possession of items made from moose were enough to get an anicinape person into trouble.

From 1955 onwards, many young Anicinapek were forced to attend residential schools, including Saint-Marc de Figury near Amos, Spanish River and Kenora in Ontario, Pointe-Bleue in Roberval and the Notre-Dame de Louvicourt pavilion in Quebec. This difficult period caused a family and cultural breakdown.

Today, many Anicinape elders recount their experiences and continue to promote healing and education to demand justice.

It's important to note that each band and community has its own history and particularities, i.e., the trails, waterways and portages used by their ancestors across the territory, the floods or displacements suffered collectively, the often-contested history surrounding the creation of their reserve, the consequences of colonial policies on families, or the establishment of their first school. It's also worth recalling the vitality of the Anicinape communities regarding their full occupation, belonging and understanding of the territory, even to this day.

Today, the Anicinape people continue to demonstrate remarkable vitality and determination in reclaiming, occupying, preserving and understanding the territory to which they belong.

# The Territorial Recognition Statement

The Territorial Recognition Statement approved by UQAT's Board of Directors reads as follows in English and in Anicinabemowin:

The Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue recognises that it is located within Nitakinan, anicinape aki. It recognizes that Nitakinan is the cradle of Indigenous languages, cultures and identities. Moreover, this territory is a prime area for knowledge transmission, exchange and healing.

*NISITOTAMOK ECI ONAKISIK Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue KITCI KIKINOAMATIWIWAM ANICINAPE AKIKAK, NITAKINAN KA ICINIKATEK. OKIKENTANAWA IIMA PITIKAMIK NITAKINAN EKI OTCISEKIN ICIKICWEWINAN, ICITWAWINAN ACITC ANICINAPE INENTAKOSIWINAN. MI ACITC WETCIMAKAKIN IIMA AKIKAK KITCI KI ACOWI MIKIWANIWAK KIKINOAMAKEWINAN, MECKOTONIKEWAN ACITC KIKEWANAN.*

Today, the territory on which UQAT is located is home to many nations, from both territorial and urban communities. UQAT points out that its institutions and activities are also located in the heart of other First Peoples' territories.

*NOKOM KITCI MANE PEPAKAN ANICINAPEK ICAWAK IIMA UQAT KITCI KIKINOAMATIWIWAM, AIANOTCIKOTC MANEWEK ANICINAPEWAKIN ACITC OTENAN OTCIWAK. AIANOTCIKOTC ANICINAPEWAKIN OTINIKATEWAN APITC MIKIMOWATC UQAT ACITC KEKON WI ICITAWATC.*



UQAT is aware that it is part of a system stemming from colonisation. The educational institution has long been used for assimilation purposes, notably through the imposition of residential schools. The negative effects continue to be felt to this day.

*OKIKENTANAWA UQAT EKI OTAPINIKATENIK  
OTAKIMIWA EKI TAKWICITC KA WAPISITC. KINWEC  
KI KAKWE ATCITCIKATENI ECI PIMATISIWATC  
ANICINAPEK, TAPICKOTC OTAPINOTCICIMIWA  
EKI MATCIWINAKANIWIWATC KITCI NTA  
KIKINOAMASOWATC WINAWA KA ICI PIMATISIWATC  
KITCI INATISIWATC.*

In light of these recognitions and in order to support the full affirmation of First Peoples, UQAT is committed to taking concrete actions, notably through education and research.

*EKIKENTAMOWATC KA ICISEWATC ANICINAPEK  
ACITC KITCI WITOKAWAKANIWIWATC NAWATC  
KITCI SOKIKAPAWIWATC ANICINAPEK, UQAT  
OKA WITCIAN MAIA KITCI KI MINOSEWATC,  
TAPICKOTC KITCI KIKINOAMAKEWINIKAK ACITC  
NANATAWAPATCIKANIWAK*

# Definitions of terms used in the Statement

## *Nitakinan*

To fully grasp the nuances in the statement, some words need to be explained. Let's start with the central word, *Nitakinan*. This term, which means territory in anicinapemowin, refers to a vast universe of relationships with the living, the non-living and the spirit world, to the sense of belonging between Indigenous people and the territory, and to the value system specific to Indigenous cultures. The following four quotations eloquently and profoundly illustrate what *Nitakinan* is all about:

"*Aki* is the land, *Ni Takinan* is our territory. The land is our home, a way of life. Our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents have always taught us how to live off the land. *Ni Takinan* is the land, the trees, the fruit, the water, the rivers, the lakes, the animals and the fish. And we're part of it. Hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering have been taught to us with respect for *Ni Takinan*." (Carlos Kistabish, Anicinape).

"We were at home everywhere. The forest is our big house, it's our pharmacy, it's our larder, it's our church, it's our school. Everything was done there, on the land. That's why when we travelled by canoe to another place, we didn't feel out of place at all. We were right at home" (Jean-Marc Niquay, Atikamekw Nehirowisiw, McCord Museum).

"In the Cree language, the word 'home' doesn't exist, because it's precisely where you are that becomes home. Your home is always the same wherever you are, you're always home no matter where you are on the territory." (Kevin Brousseau, Eeyou, McCord Museum).

"Our voice is made for the forest. We speak as if we were living in a huge open-air cathedral. In the forest, there are no walls of wood, stone or brick, no poles, no partitions, no fences. We live together in an immense silence. [...] The forest is like a temple, a sacred place where the spirit breathes. We speak in hushed voices out of respect for the animals and the souls of our ancestors. I build my fire like you light your shrine lamp or your lanterns." (Testimony of an Innu, in Noël, 1991, p. 70-71).

In this context, it's clear that the word *Nitakinan* knows no borders. The geopolitical and administrative borders that govern us today come straight out of Western culture's need to compartmentalize and separate, and are the result of colonization.

It also seems right to add that this concept, central to Indigenous cultures, is present in all Indigenous languages, such as *Nitaskinan* in Atikamekw, *Nitassinan* in Innu-aimun and *Eeyou-Istchee* in Eeyou.

## **Anicinape aki**

The word aki means land. This part of the statement specifies that UQAT is located in *Nitakinan*, Anicinape land. It refers to the millennia-old presence of the Anicinape people on this territory.

## **Territorial and urban communities**

It was decided to go ahead with these terms in order to represent both the Indigenous people living in communities<sup>2</sup> and those who live in cities. As half of Quebec's Indigenous population lives in urban areas, it is essential to include them. The term «territorial communities» refers to communities, while «urban communities» refers to urban environments.

## **Colonization**

Colonization is a process designed to erase Indigenous peoples, a process that is still ongoing today, and whose consequences are felt in many different ways. The educational model in place is part of this colonial movement when it reflects only the viewpoint of the dominant Western culture.

## **UQAT's place of governance**

Finally, it's important to add a last specification to the statement. While it's true that UQAT's activities now extends throughout Quebec, and even beyond, the first paragraph of the statement aptly states that the University's place of governance is in the heart of *Nitakinan*. The second paragraph supports this assertion by mentioning that UQAT is also present in other First Peoples' communities.

<sup>2</sup>The term community is preferred to reserve, which refers to the *Indian Act*.

# The «|» statement

**Since the statement presented above is intended more for use at the University level, the Territorial Recognition Committee proposes an «|» version, in which the entirety of the original statement is included. This version reads as follows:**



*I would like to acknowledge that the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue is located in the heart of Nitakinan, anicinape aki, the cradle of Indigenous languages, cultures and identities. This territory is an important place for the transmission of knowledge, exchange and healing.*

*Today, the territory on which UQAT is located is home to many nations, from both territorial and urban communities. UQAT points out that its institutions and activities are also located in the heart of other First Peoples' territories.*

*UQAT is well aware that it is part of a system inherited from colonization. Schools have long been used for assimilation purposes, notably through residential schools. The negative effects continue to be felt to this day.*

*In light of these acknowledgements and in order to support the full affirmation of the First Peoples, just like UQAT, I am committed and I invite you to take concrete action, particularly through education and research.*





# Concrete actions

**From the outset, the members of the Territorial Recognition Committee emphasized the importance of deploying concrete actions to support the territorial recognition statement. Several**

Several of these actions were mentioned throughout the process. Those proposed here should be understood as ideas, not limits. In other words, the list presented here should not be seen as restrictive.



# Truth Axis

- Honouring the Elders (ancestors).
- Making visible the actions regarding territorial recognition put forward by UQAT.
- Recognizing the impacts of colonialism.
- Naming the pavilions in Indigenous languages.
- Offering a course on Indigenous realities to all UQAT students.
- Establishing a directory of Indigenous resource persons.
- Training and raising UQAT staff awareness.

# Recognition Axis

- Creating scholarships for Indigenous students.
- Encouraging the hiring of Indigenous people.
- Awarding honorary doctorates to Indigenous persons.
- Naming the pavilions and translating the posters.
- Providing an appropriate remuneration rate for Indigenous speakers invited at UQAT.
- Highlighting the fact that the names Abitibi and Témiscamingue are anishnabe words + writing them in anicinabemowin.
- Offering a course on Indigenous realities to all UQAT students.
- Recognizing indigenous knowledge and expertise.
- Creating spaces where language is visible and alive.

## >> Concrete actions to support the territorial recognition statement



# Education and knowledge Axis

- Rethinking OCAP® principles on data ownership.
- Recognising Indigenous knowledge.
- Establishing and continuing co-teaching and collaborative research.
- Prioritising research / programs related to Indigenous Nations issues.
- Teaching on the territory.
- Putting forward traditional knowledge in teaching.
- Offering a course on Indigenous realities to all UQAT students.

# Alliance and sharing Axis

- Promoting the use of different knowledge (facilitating complementarity).
- Incorporate Indigenous languages into our work.
- Fostering intergenerational and indigenous/non-indigenous relationships.
- Developing places for exchanges on the territory.
- Creating common spaces: cultural places to encourage gatherings.
- Restoring friendship bonds.
- Organizing Elders' days

**The concrete actions have been linked in a circular and complementary way, and are designed to bring UQAT's statement and commitment alive and dynamic. These actions represent a starting point, and invite each and every one of us to go further by getting concretely involved.**

At the center of the illustration is the Self, for it is first and foremost important that everyone involved in the University feels concerned by the principle of territorial recognition.

Each and every one of us must take the time to engage in an exercise of self-reflection, questioning our own conceptions and preconceptions of Indigenous peoples. Once this first step has been completed, both by the members of the university community and by the institution itself, concrete actions can take off. In this way, each and every one of us will inspire the people around us, our living environment and the University.



The concrete actions are grouped into four axes: education and knowledge, alliance and sharing, recognition and truth. Some actions are specific to a particular axis, while others can be found in more than one axis at a time.

These actions feed off one another, and help to make the place and knowledge of Indigenous peoples more visible. While some actions concern the University, others are within everyone's reach.

# Use of the territorial recognition statement and deployment of concrete actions

**This section of the Reference Guide is designed to provide the members of the university community with the tools they need to put the territorial recognition statement into practice and implement concrete actions.**

## When to use the statement?

Using the complete statement can take place at several points in the university calendar, for example at convocation, at the back-to-school luncheon, at galas or recognition events, at the opening of colloquia or other scientific events, and at the opening of summer schools or intensive course weeks. It is up to all members of the university community to take ownership of this statement and use it. When it is decided to read the statement, it is strongly suggested that a designated person be appointed to do it. Knowing in advance allows this person to become familiar with the statement and to feel at ease during the presentation.

For some, the nature or the time of the event may make the statement seem too long to read. In such cases, it's up to the individual to use his judgment, present it appropriately and listen to his heart. By previously getting acquainted with the entire statement, it will be easier to adapt it and choose which section of it to present in an abbreviated version.

## **I believe in the usefulness of the statement, but am I required to do anything about it?**

Numerous calls to action, proposed by a variety of inquiry commissions<sup>3</sup>, emphasize the importance of taking action to remedy the widespread lack of knowledge about the First Peoples' realities. These calls to action are addressed to governments, institutions and the general public. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to take part in these commitments. The principle of territorial recognition as a whole, through its statement and its concrete actions, offers many ways of contributing to the necessary social changes. Reading the statement is one concrete gesture. Several others are also possible, as the illustration of concrete actions shows.

## **If I'm not in *Nitakinan*, what do I do?**

Other persons may wonder what to do with the statement when they are somewhere other than *Nitakinan*. In this situation, it's important that those involved take the time to learn about the place they're in and the people who've lived there for millennia. Once again, it's up to each individual to show openness, curiosity, respect and kindness by going to meet the First Peoples in order to better know and understand the territory.

Please note that the Mamawi Mikimodan team members can advise staff members who wish to learn more about Indigenous issues and the resources available to help them better understand these realities.

## **Are there any other ways to promote the statement?**

Some may want to include it in their lesson plans, others may prefer to read it aloud at the start of the session, and still others may want to add it to their electronic signature. We have all these possibilities. The most important thing to remember is that this approach is intended to be authentic and sincere. These two words can guide you in your use of the Territorial Recognition Statement.

Incorporating the Territorial Recognition Statement into your course will most likely lead to questions from students. It's important to be prepared for this exchange and to be humble.

<sup>3</sup>Such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Women and Girls (2019) and the Inquiry Commission on Relations Between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Québec (2019).

### **Should I only use the statement when Indigenous people are involved or present?**

Lack of knowledge is common to the entire Quebec population. The statement is a tool for raising awareness among the university community and the general public about the realities and issues facing First Peoples. This process is part of a desire to re-establish the truth and build bridges towards reconciliation. So, even if no Indigenous person is present or involved in the event in question, encouraging people to read the territorial recognition statement is a way of educating people and getting them to reflect on their preconceptions of Indigenous peoples.

### **I'm interested in the concrete actions. How can I get involved?**

Concrete actions can be carried out in a variety of ways. Some involve the University, while others are more individual in scope. The first thing to do is to position yourself in relation to these actions and decide how you wish to participate, since there are several options open to you.

You can take training courses, read works by Indigenous authors and share your readings with your colleagues, take part in activities organized at UQAT, learn words in *Anicinapemowin*, etc. The Mamawi Mikimodan Service is available to support members of the university community in this type of action.

### **I have an idea for an action, but it's not in the illustration. Can I do it anyway?**

It is certainly possible to carry out other concrete actions. Those shown in the illustration are examples proposed by the Territorial Recognition Committee members. In the event that other initiatives are undertaken, the Mamawi Mikimodan Service would be delighted to hear about them so that they can be listed and promoted to inspire other members of the academic community.

# Following up on the principle of territorial recognition

To ensure that the principle of territorial recognition is effectively deployed within UQAT, and as this is a dynamic process, it will be important to validate the statement and the concrete actions at regular intervals.

A five-year validation will give UQAT the opportunity to consolidate its relations with First Peoples over time, and to ensure that the means deployed continue to meet the needs of the region's Indigenous peoples.

## Examples of concrete actions at UQAT

UQAT is already taking concrete actions that should be known not only by the members of the academic community, but also by its partners and Indigenous communities. These actions are in line with the principle of territorial recognition, and show how important it is. Here are a few examples:

### In teaching activities:

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- Including Indigenous perspectives in the course EDU1701 - Introduction to the Teaching Profession, offered at the graduate level in education. This distance learning course gives a voice to Indigenous people in one of the session's courses.
- Development of the one-credit undergraduate course SCS2220 - Introduction to First Nations and Inuit Cultural Safety offered by the Health Sciences Teaching and Research Unit.
- Pedagogical innovation project «Towards Anishnabe Pride: An Immersive and Collaborative Teaching Experience in the Lac Simon Community», as part of an undergraduate social work course.
- Co-teaching with Indigenous partners in the undergraduate course SOC2502 - *Kikinowamaken Kikentamowin* (education and transmission of Indigenous knowledge).

## In research activities:

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- Research project « Imposed sterilizations of First Nations and Inuit women in Quebec », by Suzy Basile, Canada Research Chair on Indigenous Women's Issues, School of Indigenous Studies.
- Research project «Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDE) in Eeyou Istchee: Where Aquifers Meet Wildlife and Flora», by Éric Rosa, Groupe de recherche sur l'eau souterraine (Underground water research group).
- Research project «*Aski Masinahikan*: the valorization and intergenerational transmission of Indigenous territorial knowledge through participatory mapping in Atikamekw and Anicinabe communities (Quebec, Canada)», by Benoît Éthier, School of Indigenous Studies .
- Research project «The role of culturally and community based indigenous wellness initiatives in health system governance: evaluating extended family intervention approaches to strengthen local agency», by Ioana Radu, School of Indigenous Studies, in collaboration with the Val-d'Or Indigenous Friendship Centre and *Inshiyuu Miyupimaatissiiun* (Chisasibi Wellness) of the Cree community of Chisasibi.

## Within the University:

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- Deployment of Indigenous Peoples 101: *Nita kikenimicinam* (Get to know us) by UQAT's Continuing Education Service, online.
- Implementation of the Consultation Space pilot project for UQAT faculty members, focusing on Indigenous pedagogy.
- Implementation of the *Maamuu* Table, which brings together UQAT's various departments and services to raise awareness and discuss Indigenous issues within and outside the University.
- Project to set up an outdoor teaching, sharing and reconciliation area on the UQAT campus in Val-d'Or, where Indigenous referents are deployed.



For further information, please contact the Mamawi Mikimodan Service at [mamawimikimodan@uqat.ca](mailto:mamawimikimodan@uqat.ca).



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**Reference guide  
to UQAT's territorial  
recognition principle**